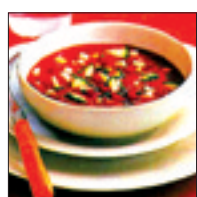


For something a little different, how about a bowl of golden melon noodles with termite mushrooms!

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An evening at Houhai is as an essential part of the Beijing experience as a visit to the Forbidden City.

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"Even high officials cannot solve the problem, how can a journalist like you?"

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Olympic Emblem Unveiled



The Beijing 2008 Olympic emblem is unveiled at the Temple of Heaven.

Photo by Wei Tong

By Xiao Rong

Special souvenirs featuring the newly unveiled logo of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games sold out Monday, just one day after the official launch of the emblem.

To commemorate the unveiling of the logo, five major department stores were designated to sell the souvenirs, including T-shirts, key rings and hats.

Titled "Chinese Seal - Dancing Beijing," the emblem was unveiled Sunday night at a ceremony held at the Temple of Heaven. It features a single Chinese character in white on a red background, in the style of a traditional Chinese seal, with the words "Beijing 2008" written below in an eastern-style brush stroke.

The figure that comprises the logo looks like a runner or dancer, while mimicking the Chinese character *wen* meaning humanity (*renwen*) or culture (*wenhua*). It also bears a distinct resemblance to the character *jing*, of Beijing, meaning capital.

The design of the emblem represents the an-

cient Chinese art of seal-cutting, which dates back 3,700 years to the Yin Dynasty.

"In this emblem, I saw the promise and potential of a New Beijing and a Great Olympics," said International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Jacques Rogge in a video address delivered at the ceremony.

The Beijing Organizing Committee will launch a US \$1.65 billion marketing program in September. IOC Marketing Director Michael Payne says he believes Beijing has both a strong emblem and powerful backing from the business community to make the program a success.

Nine multinational companies, including Coca Cola, Kodak and Swatch, have already signed up to be worldwide sponsors for the Beijing Games.

Following the unveiling ceremony, Coca Cola announced that one million cans badged with the Beijing Olympic logo were to be released on the market. Meanwhile 18 Coca Cola billboards along Chang'an Avenue have been changed to include the new logo.

Seeking Perfect Beauty

By Sun Ming

A 24-year-old Beijing woman plans to transform herself into an "outstanding beauty," by way of cosmetic surgery, and the operations will not cost her a cent. Hao Lulu, who underwent double eyelid surgery two weeks ago and on Wednesday received breast implants and liposuction on her calves, will subject herself to a total of 14 separate medical procedures.

In the coming six months, the Beijing freelance fashion writer and self-employed jewelry dealer will undergo further operations that will, among other things, reshape her nose and buttocks, and lighten her skin color.

Bao Huai, the marketing director of EverCare, the private clinic performing the operations, told *Beijing Today* last Wednesday, "The surgical procedures will involve transforming her eyes, nose, chin, breasts, abdomen, bottom, legs and skin." The entire cost of the project will reach 300,000 yuan, which will be met by an unnamed sponsor, according to Bao.

According to a spokesperson for the clinic, American's CNN will follow the entire process, which the clinic has dubbed "Beauty Dream-works Project," and will produce a documentary detailing how an average-looking young woman is transformed into a striking beauty.

"We are doing this to demonstrate the high standard of cosmetic surgery in China," said Bao Huai, "There is a very deep misunderstanding as to the level of China's cosmetic surgery and it's time we set the record straight." He added that the clinic hoped the public could be made aware that people can determine their own appearance through cosmetic surgery.

However, the project has attracted considerable criticism, with many people casting doubt on the clinic's motives. "It's just an attempt at self-promotion by the clinic," commented Li Yongjie, director of the Functional Neurosurgery Department of Beijing Xuanwu Hospital.

(Continued page 2)



Hao Lulu before any cosmetic surgery (left), and one day after the double eyelid operation (above)

EXECUTIVE EDITOR: ZHANG XIAOXIA
EDITOR: SUN MING DESIGNER: LI SHI PANG LEI

Enemies No Longer

By Sun Ming

A 73-year-old Chinese veteran of the Korean War is seeking help to find the American owners of the pictures he picked up on the battlefield 50 years ago.

"I really hope the two pictures can be returned to the American veteran or their family members soon. It's my long dream," the Chinese veteran Zhang Guohua told *Beijing Today* on Sunday, "We were enemies once, but there are no eternal enemies."

The veteran, who lives in Huludao, Liaoning Province, said that long before the 50th anniversary of the armistice, which fell on July 27, he hoped he could realize this dream.

A bombed mailbox

As a soldier in the Chinese People's Volunteers, Zhang Guohua entered the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in June 1951, joining the Korean War against America. On July 27, 1953, China, North Korea and the United States signed an armistice, ending the war that began on June 25, 1950.

"I still clearly remember the day I found the pictures. It was the morning of July 14, 1953, 13 days before the armistice," said Zhang, "Our front-line unit arrived at a US artillery position located around three kilometers south of the Han River, one of the major rivers in North Korea."

When Zhang and his comrades arrived, the American troops and artillery had withdrawn. Not far from the artillery position was a snack bar and a mailbox next to it.

"The mailbox had been bombed and several letters were scattered on the ground," said Zhang, "Obviously, the American soldiers had withdrawn in a hurry."

Zhang picked up one of the letters, which contained three black and white photographs and



One of the three photographs



a letter. One photo was of a man in his twenties wearing a hat and a coat cuddling a girl and a boy; another showed a woman of a similar age to the man, cuddling the same two children; and the third was of the two children. In the background of all three photos was house.

A fellow soldier who could read a little English told Zhang that the letter was from a woman to her husband, who was on the front line.

Kept for 50 years

"To be frank, I didn't think any more about it at that time. I kept the letter only because I liked the two cute American children. I thought they made a good souvenir."

Zhang said that except himself, no one else paid attention to the scattered mails of the American soldiers. Most of his comrades directly entered the snack bar where some ice cream,

chocolate and beer were left. They got some booty, such as portable radio, duck down quilt and harmonica.

"After we came back, many comrades who didn't get to the front line asked for souvenirs from us. It's a tradition, you know," said Zhang, explaining why he gave one of the photos to another soldier, called Liu Busheng, "It's really a pity that I gave him the picture which has the American soldier. And unfortunately, I lost the letter."

For a long time, Zhang kept the remaining two pictures in the bottom of a cabinet, a secret known only to his wife, Zhao Xiulan.

"I would have been put in prison if it had been discovered I had the pictures during the 10-year Cultural Revolution," said Zhang, "I might have been accused of maintaining illicit relations with foreigners!" However he never considered getting rid of the pictures.

To find the rightful owner

Zhang said the idea of returning the two pictures came to him only recently. "Time flies, maybe he's dead. His two children must be over 50 years old by now," he said. "If I'm lucky enough to meet the American soldier, I think we should only smile at each other. As the old Chinese saying goes, 'a smile can dissolve any enmity.'"

Zhang has contacted his local newspaper in Huludao, and also hopes publication of his story in *Beijing Today* will help.

"The American soldier might have belonged to the 178th regiment, because I heard it was the last unit to withdraw from the US artillery position," he said.

The *Huludao Daily* has sent reporters to Hebei Province to look for Liu Busheng, to whom Zhang gave the photo of the American soldier.

China to Crack Down on Illegal Land Use

The Chinese government has called an indefinite suspension of applications to establish or extend land development zones, and warned those responsible for illegal developments will be severely punished.

The move was announced at a national teleconference organized by the State Council Thursday on regulations of the land market, land use in development

zones and land management.

Premier Wen Jiabao sent a message to the meeting, calling for the adoption of the strictest possible land management system, by perfecting land management law, cracking down on illegal land use approvals and increasing supervision of development zones and macro-control of land use.

Wen emphasized that land was fundamental to people's live-

lihoods and stressed the state policy to protect land.

Vice-Premier Zeng Peiyan told the meeting that local governments should strictly enforce laws on land management and urgently tackle illegal activities concerning land use in development zones.

Zeng said the government's ability to control the land market has constantly improved since

the launch of the nation's reform and opening-up policy, especially in the last five years.

Although the government has increased regulation of the land market, many illegal practices have continued concerning development zones, land occupation, preferential policies on land use, and malfeasant use of land management powers to occupy farmland, he added. (Xinhua)

Wild Animals Barred from Menus

By Zhao Bin

Guangdong people's reputation for "eating everything on four legs except for the table" is in danger of extinction, if the local government has its way. On July 25, the Guangdong provincial legislative passed a recently-revised version of a regulation directing people to try to stop eating wild animals.

The statement in the amendment that "people should give up their habit of eating wild ani-

mals" is far more tepid than the many calls made at a public hearing on the matter held in July that eating of wild animals be banned. Exotic creatures have long been part of Guangdong cuisine, but their consumption came under fire this spring when the civet cat was targeted as the possible point of transmission of the SARS virus to humans.

The eating of wild animals has also been an issue in Beijing that came to a head on July 11

with the issuance of an immediate ban on consumption of more than 1,800 species of animals by the municipal government. Creatures on the list include many rare and key protected species, as well as a few animals relatively common on the menus of local restaurants, such as squirrels and peacocks.

Wang Minzhong, head of the Wildlife Protection Office of the Beijing Forestry Bureau, told *Beijing Today* last Friday, "No

matter whether it is raised in captivity or the wild, if an animal is on the list, eating it is strictly forbidden." Anyone that reports the illegal serving of banned meats at local restaurants will receive a reward of 500 to 1,000 yuan.

Wang said that since the ban was issued, all 57 enterprises dealing with wildlife trade in Beijing have been closed or had their wildlife trade licenses revoked.

Prices Grounded at Capital Airport

By Zhao Bin

Finally, the days of travelers having to shell out 35 yuan for a plate of french fries on their way out of Beijing may be over. The prices of over 70 kinds of food items and commodities at the Beijing Capital International Airport have been slashed to nearly the same levels as in local supermarkets, *Beijing Youth*

Daily reported on July 31.

Following the change, the marked price for a 500 milliliter bottle of ice tea is 3.5 yuan and that for one can of Coca-Cola is 3 yuan in stores run by Beijing Capital Airport Corporation, Ltd (BCACL).

Just a few weeks ago at those same stores, one can of local Yanjing beer cost a whopping 20 yuan,

10 times higher than the standard price at shops downtown.

BCACL began efforts to reel in prices at all its stores on October 1 last year, after the National Development and Reform Commission urged the Price Bureau of Beijing Municipal to break the retail monopoly and supervise prices of goods at the Capital Airport.

The price gauging at the airport first came to prominent public attention with the publishing of an article by economist Mao Yushi in *Beijing Youth Daily* on August 7, 2001. He complained that four cups of coffee and three sandwiches ordered in a café on the second floor of the airport's main terminal cost him a staggering 480 yuan.

Shanghai Hospital Offers Installment Plan for Operations

By Chen Si

A quiet but significant reform of Shanghai's health care system occurred on July 16, when a patient at Ren'ai Hospital paid to have an operation in installments. The new policy may signal a move away from the "pay first, operate later" mode common in hospitals around this country.

Under the staged operation fee plan, patients must put up half the money before a procedure, pay another 30 thirty

percent when discharged and complete the rest of the payment over the following three months. No interest fees are charged in this system, aimed at lightening the economic burden of health care for some of the city's residents.

The system is applicable for people with legal identification cards facing operation fees exceeding 20,000 yuan and poor or unemployed people facing fees of over 10,000 yuan.

"The new system is guaranteed by patients' credit. The hospital will sign agreements with patients that clearly state the obligations of both sides and the exact procedures for patients to pay their fees," said Tong Ying, director of Ren'ai Hospital, as quoted in a report on Chinaradio.com on July 22. "Our hospital also plans to cooperate with an insurance company to perfect the system."

The first beneficiary of the

staggered fee plan was a man from Zhejiang Province who underwent an operation that cost 16,000 yuan, more than he could afford in one payment. "It was a big surprise to hear that we could pay the operation fees in separate stage. This way he could undergo the operation and we can be sure we have time to get the money together," one of the man's relatives, surname Gu, told *Beijing Today* on July 29.

Foreign Firm Registration Forms Get Facelift

By Xiao Rong

Last Friday marked the debut of a new set of foreign investment enterprise registration forms.

The forms are for use in registering the establishment, alteration and market withdrawal of foreign-invested enterprises and their branches, foreign enterprises, permanent representative offices of foreign enterprises and corporations. They are aimed at regulating registration procedures and promoting the development of foreign investment, according to a statement issued by the Foreign Investment Enterprise

Registration Bureau under the State Administration for Commerce and Industry.

"There used to be no uniform, nationwide foreign investment enterprise registration forms, which caused a lot of trouble, inconvenience and confusion in registration and the collection of data on foreign investment," said Sheng Baochen, an official at the general office of the bureau.

The forms are available for download at <http://wzj.saic.gov.cn> or can be picked up at foreign investment enterprise registration administrations at various levels.

City Encourages Green Thumbs

By Zhao Bin

On July 15, the Capital Greening Committee (CGC) under the Beijing Municipal government released detailed rules meant to encourage individuals to invest in the planting of fruit trees and productive forests in certain areas of Beijing. The rules, based on guidelines set by the local government on July 11, offer government refunds of up to 44,700 yuan per hectare planted at the expense of private investors within the capital's second green belt.

According to the rules, open bidding will be held for planting projects in the area, and winning investors will be able

to enjoy the said refunds, as well as exemptions from agricultural taxes and other preferential terms.

"We welcome all prospective investors, who are invited to directly contact branches of the committee in all districts," Lan Bincui, Greening Office Deputy Director of the CGC, told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

The second green belt will lie between the city's first green belt and the sixth ring road, covering a total area of 1,650 square kilometers in ten districts. By 2008, the forested area inside the belt is planned to increase by 412 square kilometers, doubling its forest coverage rate.

Chaoyang Business Festival Slated for October

By Xiao Rong

The Fourth Chaoyang International Business Festival, one of the city's key economic and trading exchange activities, is scheduled to be held between October 9 and 12.

With the theme of "Business opportunities, Cooperation and Development," this year's festival aims at promoting the concept of international finance services and refining the integrated strategy of the Central Business District (CBD), said Chaoyang District acting governor??? Chen Gang at last Thursday's press conference.

"The service industry in Chaoyang District now accounts for about 70 percent of our GDP growth, so the development of the modern service industry in Chaoyang will be our highlight this year," Chen said.

Chen also stressed that the festival is to create a platform on which investors from home and abroad can better communicate and cooperate, as well as learn more about Chaoyang District.

The festival consists of three parts; a project finance exposition, a high-level forum and business and cultural events. The CBD International Financial Services and Office Building Projects Expo will highlight the core area scheme of Beijing CBD and the latest investment policies and investment bidding projects in Chaoyang.

Among the three high-level forums to be held, the Domestic CBD Industrial Development Mayor Forum is the top priority, aiming at promoting cooperation between cities through discussions on CBD industrial development.

(Continued from page 1)

Not especially beautiful, but full of personality, is how Hao's friends describe her. Born and raised in Beijing, Hao graduated from the China University of Geosciences at the age of 19. She then spent three years in the United Kingdom studying jewelry appraisal.

Hao says she does not consider beauty to be as important as a noble character, "But nowadays it is technically possible for me to become more physically beautiful. If I can become beautiful both inside and outside, why not?"

In an interview with *Beijing Today* last Friday, she emphasized that she does not consider herself unattractive. "Many western people have said that I am pretty. I wouldn't have considered cosmetic surgery if I hadn't happened to meet Bao Huai last year." At that time, Bao was seeking a subject for the clinic's "Beauty Dreamworks Project."

"I persuaded her to undergo the cosmetic surgery because she is a very suitable candidate," said Bao, "In the eyes of most Chinese, Hao is no more than average looking. She has the foundation to become a beauty

through cosmetic surgery. And she is very open-minded."

"In six months, Hao will become a beauty in the eyes of both western and oriental people. Her face will neither look as mild as most oriental faces, nor will it appear as chiseled as most western faces," he added.

Hao says her boyfriend is fully behind her decision to accept the treatment, but the young woman who wants to become an actress in the future has not told her parents about her comprehensive cosmetic surgery.

How good is plastic surgery in China?

Zhou Gang, the leader of the surgical team that will operate on Hao and honorary president of EverCare, told *Beijing Today* that all the members of the team are top cosmetic surgeons in China.

"Don't look down on Chinese cosmetic surgeons. They are no less skilled than foreign surgeons," he said, perhaps somewhat defensively.

According to Zhou, he and his colleagues are very enthusiastic about the project to beautify Hao. "The project is receiving considerable attention, even from foreign media. We hope that in six months

Seeking Beauty

time, when Hao has become a very beautiful woman, people will no longer question the standard of plastic surgery in China."

Zhuo Gang says the surgical team has an image of the beauty they aim to transform Hao into, however they refuse to make it public before the process is completed.

"No operation is 100 percent safe, but we'll proceed with extreme caution. We've considered every possible problem and have corresponding plans to deal with them," said Zhou.

Dr. Chen Huanran, one of the most prominent plastic surgeons in China, told *Beijing Today* on Thursday last week that he does not consider the "Beauty Dreamworks Project" to be just an elaborate stunt by EverCare.

Chen, who is not involved in the project, is chief surgeon at the Chinese Medical Academy's Plastic Surgery Hospital.

"We really should endeavor to let people at home and abroad know the true quality of cosmetic surgery performed in China," said Chen, "The skill of our plastic surgeons is equal to that of those in Hollywood, Japan and South Korea, who are often highly lauded by young and fashionable Chinese."

Chen said that among the over 100 cosmetic surgeons in his hospital, 70 percent of them have studied in western countries for more than two years.

Cosmetic surgery has become increasingly popular in China over the past decade. People have more disposable income than ever before, and young, upwardly mobile men and women are increasingly image conscious. According to the China Cosmetic Association, in the past few years, millions of Chinese women have undergone cosmetic surgery, mainly double eyelid operations

and receiving breast implants.

According to Chen, many Chinese celebrities have undergone cosmetic surgery in Beijing, Shanghai and other big cities in China, "but claim out of vanity that they had the operations in South Korea or Japan."

Disorder in the market

Beijing Today spoke to more than ten plastic surgeons last week from clinics in Beijing. Most attributed the low regard in which most people hold the cosmetic surgery industry to a lack of regulation. Because of the enormous profits that can be made, many unlicensed beauty parlors also offer cosmetic surgery services.

According to the Chinese Consumers' Association, consumer complaints last year focused on untrained employees at beauty parlors who botched cosmetic surgeries. Such mishaps have disfigured more than 200,000 people in the last decade.

A newly issued regulation by the Ministry of Health took effect on May 1 last year, aimed at preventing such unlicensed operations. According to the regulation, any place offering

cosmetic surgery must have an official license and meet required medical standards for doctor qualifications and equipment.

"We can't deny that there are some low level licensed cosmetic surgeons in China," said Chen Huanran who proposed that China should clearly grade surgeon's licenses. Currently, all surgeons have the same kind of license, regardless of the type of procedures they can perform.

In most western countries, there are three grades of licenses for surgeons; common surgeons, specialized surgeons and plastic surgeons.

"Qualified common surgeons are not necessarily qualified cosmetic surgeons," said Chen, "In western countries, compared with common surgeons, plastic cosmetic surgeons usually need four or five more years special training. But in China, there is no such requirement."

Also, Chen admitted that the quality of locally made products used in plastic surgery operations, such as scalpels, sutures and implants was of an inferior standard to those produced in western countries.

Kingsoft Announces New Online Game

By Shan Jinliang

China's virus killing software flagship, Kingsoft announced the debut of its first self-develop online game in Zhuozhou, Hebei Province on July 26. The company vows to build the game into China's No. 1 by the end of next year.

Online games revenue is growing in China by 50 percent annually and could reach two billion yuan this year. Latest figures by China National Information Center show Chinese players now spend 9.9 hours playing each week.

The company said it would spend 40 million yuan in developing and marketing the new online game, called Jianxia Qingyuan, the largest ever investment by a domestic company in online games.

Kingsoft hopes the new game will enter the top five among a current 100 online games on the market, hosting one million online players by the end of 2004.

Industry analysts, however, are not so optimistic. In the past few years, China's top three portal websites, Sina, Sohu and Netease and a few other IT companies have entered the sector, or developed their own online games, but few have made profits. According to local media reports, the three portal websites will put a large percentage of capital from convertible bonds worth two billion yuan to grab online games prof-



its, and at the same time, foreign IT giants from South Korea, the US and Europe are also investing in the market.

Kingsoft began public testing of its new online game from July 31, and a number of players have expressed dissatisfaction with it, saying the game has several technical problems. Telecom Information Daily commented Tuesday that smart design, original music, good kung fu effects are key factors that enable foreign online games, in particular South Korean games, to outpace Chinese games.

Tian echoed the comment and attributed it to the lack of experience of Chinese online games developers and operators. "Chinese online game developers have to imitate foreign games just like South Koreans did with US or European developers a few years ago," he added, but localized and intimate service will be a big weapon for Chinese online games to overtake their foreign counterparts.

Rebirth of Old Scissors Plant

By Shan Jinliang

The plant of China's oldest scissors brand, Wang Mazi, was declared bankrupt by Beijing's rural Changping District Court on July 21.

The news might come as a sad surprise to many old Beijingers. Wang Mazi, or Pockmarked Wang, was founded by Wang Qingshan in Beijing in 1651 and is one of the two most famous scissors brands in China, the other being Zhang Xiaoquan, founded in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province in 1663.

Zhang Xiaoquan recovered from the brink of bankruptcy to achieve an annual profit of around 10 percent after transforming from a state-owned enterprise to a private one in 2000. However, Wang Mazi stopped its production line in 2001 while it took over around half of China's scissors market. In the 1980s, the plant sold 70,000 kitchen knives and 400,000 scissors every month.

From riches to rags

The plant began to decline in performance in the early 1990s and started losing money from 1995, when it became part of Beijing Wang Mazi Industrial and Trade Group under the Beijing No. 2 Light Industrial Bureau.

The move did not help to deal with the problems facing the plant, according to a commentary on People.com on July 31.

Wang Chuanli, deputy general manager of Zhao Xiaoqian Scissors Plant said in a telephone interview with *Beijing Today* on Tuesday that lack of systematic and technological innovation was the direct cause for Wang Mazi's fall.

"The government has intervened too much in its operation," said Wang, "and the managers have changed too frequently." Seven directors have taken office in the plant over the past seven years, and it has been placed under strict restrictions by several governmental departments.

"Wang Mazi stuck with its old, complex and expensive manufacturing techniques," said Wang Chuanli, "and as far as I know, it has never upgraded its technology."

Bai Xiqian, general manager of Beijing Lichang Wang Mazi Industrial and Trade Group, the current brand owner, told *Legal Daily* in February that it is no wonder the Wang Mazi plant had closed, since the cost of its scissors would be 50 percent higher than the market price. Annual sales had fallen to around 10,000 by the late 1990s.

In contrast, Zhang Xiaoquan spent 20 million yuan to introduce the latest production facilities to meet the new market demands. These demands include knives and scissors for new fields, such as tourism and gifts.

New birth

While the old factory was losing money in 2001, seven former plant workers collected 500,000 yuan and established a new factory named Beijing Wanshunhao Scissors Corporation, a subsidiary of Beijing Lichang Wang Mazi Industrial and Trade Group, after winning authorization to manufacture Wang Mazi-branded scissors and knives.

General manager Bai Xinqian told *Beijing Youth Daily* in January that the new plant produces over 200 kinds of scissors and knives, twice as many as the old plant, and generated a sales volume of 1.2 million yuan in 2002. The new plant is also planning to increase its current eight sales chain stores to 10 in Beijing this year.

The future of Wang Mazi might yet be a little bumpy, since a number of private scissors producers have outperformed the two old brands recently, and Guangdong-based Shibazi Kitchen Corporation has grown into China's largest kitchen scissors and knives production base in the past 20 years. Today, Wang Mazi and Zhang Xiaoquan together hold less than 30 percent of the national market.



Photos by Photocom

Yanjing Snatches Fujian Prize

By Shan Jinliang

While the country's largest beer manufacturer, Tsingtao, is preparing to celebrate its 100th birthday on August 15, its major rival, Beijing-based Yanjing moved to squeeze Tsingtao's share in south China by taking a controlling stake in Fujian Province's Huiquan Beer on July 26.

It is the first such takeover involving domestically listed beer companies. Yanjing was listed on the Hong Kong and Shenzhen Stock exchange in 1997 and Huiquan in February 2003. It cost Yanjing 362 million yuan to acquire the 38.15 percent stake from the state-owned Assets Management Corporation of Fujian, Hui'an County, where Huiquan is based.

Yanjing has taken 85 percent of the Beijing market and 45 percent of the north China market since it was established in 1980. The share acquisition is its largest single investment ever, and industry analysts and Yanjing itself describe the move as a step that will strengthen the domestic beer market, as foreign companies increase their presence in China, the world's largest beer market.

Win-win deal

Yanjing says the deal will benefit both companies, and shares in the two soared in Shenzhen and Shanghai on July 29, the day the news was released. Yanjing shares closed up 0.75 percent, while Huiquan's rose 1.5 percent.

"It will be a decisive step for Yanjing to establish itself in Fu-

jian, and then the whole south China market," Ding Guangxue, deputy general manager of Yanjing told *Beijing Today* last Wednesday. Last August, Yanjing made its first acquisition in Fujian Province, buying Quanzhou-based Huiyuan Beer and raised its annual production to 100 million liters. Yanjing plans to upgrade Huiquan's facilities and eventually raise the annual production in the province to 650 million liters, outstripping Tsingtao, which has an annual production of 300 million liters.

China Securities analyst Qiu Liqiang told *Beijing Today* last Tuesday that the deal involves some risk, given that Huiquan announced a predicted profit decline of 50 percent for the first half over the same period last year. Ding responded, "We do not care about short-term earnings for out national strategic development."

Fujian productivity

Currently, all the beer breweries in Fujian produce a total of 1.14 billion liters of beer a year, slightly higher than the consumption ability of 1.1 million. The surplus is sold in neighboring Guangdong and even Taiwan. At the same time, Yanjing vice chairman Dai Yongquan told the press last Wednesday that it will cost too much to purchase a brewery in Guangdong.

This could account for Ding's determination to expand the capacity of Fujian breweries to supply the south China market, the US and Southeast Asia market. With six factories in Fu-

jian and Guangdong, Tsingtao could export considerably more than Yanjing, while domestic beer consumption growth is in decline.

Ding said, however, that his company would only focus on the local Fujian market for the time being, and the whole south China market would be a long-term target. The Fujian-based *Straits Metropolitan Daily* commented last Wednesday that Yanjing was preparing to move on the Guangdong market, traditionally dominated by Tsingtao, using its breweries in neighboring Guangxi, Hunan and Jiangxi.

Domestic combination

"It is sure to be a good deal," Du Zhujun, secretary general of the China Vintage Industrial Association beer department told *Securities Daily*. "It will enhance the merging of China's beer companies and help them in their negotiations with foreign counterparts."

Qiu Liqiang told *Beijing Today* that the event would not only strengthen the forces of the country's top three beer manufacturers, the third being China Resources Beer, it could help national players defend against incursions by foreign companies such as South Africa SAB and Belgian Interbrew.

Ding said Yanjing had no intention to rush to acquire other companies, just to expand the market. "We need time to run well these acquired companies, and we only choose the best partners," he said.

More Shopping Malls Planned

By Shan Jinliang

The Beijing Golden Resources Shopping Mall, claimed to be the world largest single commercial building, will complete construction work this November. It is due to open for business next October in Haidian District.

With a total investment of 3.8 billion yuan, the Golden Resources shopping mall will contain over 600 franchised stores, 100 theme restaurants and a dozen large entertainment sites.

Thai Lotus Supermarket has signed the first rental contract with the Shopping Mall's developer, Beijing Golden Resources Time Shopping Center, on a business promotion activity on July 29. More than 200 businesses participated in the promotion, including Metro Supermarket, Time Warner and furniture retailer Easy Home.

According to Beijing's tenth five-year plan, four new shopping malls are to be built in the city's north, south, east and west. One of these, located at Yizhuang Business Development Area, laid its foundation in late 2001, another, at Zhongguancun, started construction in January 2002.

Beijing Commercial Commission spokesman Yan Ligang told press last week that shopping malls will play a key role in driving the city's investment and sales growth, and with the introduction of international brands, shopping malls could become the name card for the city.

RMB Value to Remain Unchanged

By Charles Jiang

Debate on whether or not the Renminbi (RMB) will appreciate seems to have come to an end, at least for now. Analysts are now predicting that the value of the yuan will remain stable in the short term.

China has been under increasing pressure during the last few months from Japan, the United States and other developed countries to revalue its currency. These countries maintain that the Chinese currency is undervalued and that China has tremendous amounts of foreign exchange reserve and a huge trade surplus, which adversely affects world economic growth.

Despite this pressure to increase the value of the RMB, Chinese officials and economists say that maintaining the stability of the currency will benefit the national economy as well as be conducive to a global economic recovery. A revaluation may plunge the Chinese economy into a long-term recession.

According to senior Chinese economists, appreciation would adversely affect Chinese foreign trade and export. The price of export commodities would go up, lowering the competitiveness of the Chinese manufacturing industry.

If this were to happen, millions of jobs in these labor-intensive enterprises would be wiped out, leading to widespread instability.

Appreciation of the RMB would also hamper foreign direct investment from entering China and worsen the already grim situation of the agricultural sector.

Although revaluation is unlikely within the year, observers believe that the Chinese policy of a fixed foreign exchange rate will become more flexible as the Chinese economy becomes increasingly integrated with the rest of the world.

Private Banks Seek Licenses

By Charles Jiang

Financial experts are reviewing proposals from five private banks that plan to apply for business licenses with banking industry regulators.

The applicants are Ruifeng Bank, based in Shenyang, Liaoning Province; Great Wall Bank, in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province; Jiangyin Bank, in Jiangyin, Jiangsu Province; Nanhua Bank, in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province; and Minhua Bank, in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province. All are sponsored by private enterprises, including some listed companies.

"These five projects have all been well planned," Xu Dianqing, chief researcher with the Great Wall Finance Research Institute told reporters.

The sole objective of the institute, founded in 2000 by top Chinese economists, has been to research the feasibility of establishing private banks in China, with the intention of breaking the monopoly of the inefficiently operated state-owned banks.

Another reason for establishing private banks is to help finance the development of the non-state sector, which is not adequately served by the four largest state banks and existing shareholding commercial banks.

However, critics warn that many risks need to be considered before the applications are approved. The main concern is how private banks will guarantee their credibility. Unlike state-owned banks, which have state credit behind them, private banks may not win the trust of depositors without a compulsory deposit-insurance system.

Another potential problem is that the motives of some private enterprises may appear suspicious. "Banking is a steady industry. If you want to make huge profits quickly, you may invest your money in the stock market. You cannot expect a high return from this industry," warned one expert.

The third issue is whether affiliated loans should be allowed. Doing so would raise the risk of private enterprises creating a financial platform simply to lend money to themselves.

Hong Kong's New Finance Chief Faces Tough Challenges



Henry Tang

Hong Kong, Aug 5 (AFP) - Hong Kong's new financial secretary Henry Tang said he looks forward to the tough challenge of re-viving the economy, while admitting to feeling a bit tense in his first day on the job.

"I feel excited and tense at same time, but I look forward to the challenges," he told reporters Tuesday as he showed up for work. Chief executive Tung Chee-hwa confirmed his appointment to the top post Monday.

"I have confidence that we can tackle

the challenges together," Tang said with his usual broad smile.

Tang said his "foremost priority is to improve Hong Kong's economy," and he pledged to review measures to wipe out the budget deficit by 2006-07.

"I believe that first and foremost in the minds of most people in Hong Kong today is how to revitalise our economy," he said, promising "a realistic approach" to balance the books.

"There are many, many measures at our disposal, some of which are more palatable, some of which may have better effects, some of which can be very expensive," he added.

Hong Kong's budget deficit will exceed the original target of 67.9 billion Hong Kong dollars (8.7 billion US dollars), Frederick Ma, financial services and treasury secretary, said in press reports Tuesday.

"The SARS outbreak has led to an increase in government expenses, while tax revenue profits are likely to fall as businesses have been badly hit by the epidemic," Ma said.

In an attempt to close the growing defi-

cit, the government plans to either sell or secure assets worth 112 billion dollars between this financial year and 2007-2008, with 30 billion dollars to be raised in the next fiscal year, stated the report.

Media commentary Tuesday said all eyes are now on Tang to see if he can drag Hong Kong out of the economic doldrums, with unemployment at a record 8.6 percent, property prices down nearly 70 percent since 1997/8, and consumer confidence hit badly by the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

Tang's appointment was welcomed overall by the press, which also noted the challenges facing him and the government.

Tang replaced financial secretary Antony Leung, who stepped down last month following a scandal over his purchase of a luxury car, shortly before announcing a budget including a large increase in vehicle taxes.

Analysts' Take:

The new financial secretary's toughest task is to revive the economy and, at the same time, put forward a schedule to reas-

sure the financial community that the government can contain the budget deficit. The government should focus more on revitalizing the SARS-hit economy, instead of sticking to the rigid balanced-budget timetable.

The new financial secretary should slow down the pace of dealing with the deficit problem. Meanwhile, the government must also be very careful not to send the wrong message that it has given up efforts to reduce the deficit.

He should deliver his ideas on economic policies as soon as possible to eliminate market uncertainties and speculation.

- Tang Sai-on, chief economist of Bank of East Asia (BEA)

I am glad this position has been filled, as there are still lots to be done... so the sooner the better.

The first challenge Tang faces is to lead Hong Kong during its economic transition and restructuring, which is fundamental to lowering the territory's high unemployment rate. Tang also needs to communicate effectively to both the public and lawmakers.

- Dong Tao, chief regional economist of Credit Suisse First Boston

Hyundai Chief, on Trial, Commits Suicide

Seoul, Aug 3 (AP) - Chung Mong-hun, a top executive of South Korea (ROK)'s Hyundai conglomerate who was embroiled in a scandal over a historic 2000 summit between the two Koreas, committed suicide by leaping from his office window on Monday.

Chung, 54, jumped from the 12th-story of the Hyundai headquarters building in central Seoul, police said. A janitor found his body in shrubbery near a parking lot at around 5:50 a.m. local time.

"I hope all of you can forgive me for my foolish act," Chung wrote in a note left for Kim Yoon-kyu, his deputy. He urged Kim to continue joint economic ventures with North Korea (DPRK). In separate notes to his wife and three children, he also appealed for forgiveness and asked that his ashes be scattered over Diamond Mountain, a scenic resort in North Korea (DPRK) where his company runs a money-losing tourism project.

"Everything is my fault. I am leaving everything to you," he said in a note to his wife, Hyun Jeong-un. Only parts of the notes were released to the media, so it was not clear whether Chung explained his circumstances further.

Preliminary investigations showed that Chung appeared to have jumped four or five hours before his body was found.

Chung was on trial on charges stemming from allegations that his company helped former President Kim Dae-jung's government secretly pay North Korea (DPRK) \$100 million to get Pyongyang to agree to a summit between the Koreans. The meeting was a breakthrough in efforts to reconcile the North and South, though tension is high again because of the North's suspected development of nuclear weapons.

In June, Chung was indicted on charges of doctoring company books to hide the money transfers. If convicted, he could have faced up to three years in prison.

Chung was also accused of embezzling \$12.5 million in company funds to bribe government officials and politicians to win badly needed political and financial support for his companies and North Korean (DPRK) projects.

The mammoth Hyundai, which used to be South Korea (ROK)'s largest conglomerate, was divided into three subgroups after the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis: one controlled by Hyundai Motor, South Korea (ROK)'s No. 1 carmaker; the second led by Hyundai Heavy Industries, the world's largest shipbuilding company; and the third under the stewardship of Chung Mong-hun.

An independent counsel appointed by President Roh Moo-hyun to investigate the summit scandal announced in June that Hyundai-Asan sent \$500 million to North Korea (DPRK), but said only \$400 million was a company investment. The rest was raised and sent by Hyundai on behalf of the government, the counsel said.

All the money was sent to Pyongyang through Hyundai-Asan shortly before the June 2000 summit, the investigator said. The summit helped then-President Kim him win the 2000 Nobel Peace Prize.



Chung Mong-hun

US Puts 1.14-billion-dollar Price on Restoring Iraqi Oil

Washington, Aug 5 (AFP) - The price of restoring Iraq's oil and gas industry is about 1.14 billion dollars and rising amid sabotage and looting, according to a detailed, official plan.

The bulk of the costs - 652 million dollars in total - was related to two major contracts already put out to tender for re-viving oil fields in the north and south of Iraq, the 33-page final work plan showed.

Other areas needing repair included gas facilities, the distribution network and refineries.

Microsoft Faces 'Final Chance' in EU Anti-trust Probe

Brussels, Aug 6 (AFP) - The European Union gave US software giant Microsoft a "last opportunity" to answer charges that it has unfairly crushed competitors or face the prospect of fines and enforced changes to its ways.

The European Commission, the EU's executive organ, said the interim findings of a four-year anti-trust investigation proved Microsoft guilty of squelching rivals of the Windows Media Player and its low-end servers.

Citing new evidence collated from a survey of more than 150 Microsoft customers, Brussels said it had a "very impressive and substantive" case that could lead to fines against the world's biggest software maker.

More Airlines to Offer Seat-beds

Aug 5 (USA TODAY) - International business class is getting an upgrade. Airlines are installing fancier seats that recline into beds in their business-class cabins, several years after sleeper seats made their debut in first class.

Northwest Airlines is the latest to start the transition. It will announce Wednesday that it will offer seat-beds reclining 176 degrees - just 4 degrees short of flat - on the Airbus A-330 jets to be introduced in September, as well as on its Boeing 747-400s now flying across the Pacific.

Many foreign carriers have already introduced flat or nearly flat seat-beds in business class. But domestic carriers haven't been as quick to catch on. So far, only American and United have seats that recline 150 degrees in international business class.

(Chris Woodyard)

Italians Win Race to Clone a Horse

Boston, Aug 6 (FT) - Italian scientists have won the race to create the world's first cloned horse, leading some to suggest that despite the present rules against it, the development might mean racing legends returning to run again.

Some optimists suggest successful horses such as Seabiscuit could be copied if the technology came into widespread use.

Researchers at the Laboratory of Reproductive Technology in Cremona announced on Thursday in the journal Nature that a cloned workhorse was born in late May, the latest addition to a growing list of cloned animals including cats, goats, cows, rabbits and sheep.

(Victoria Griffith)

U.S. Hotels Challenged by Threat of Terrorism

Aug 6 (USA TODAY) - The U.S. hotel industry is taking fortress-like security measures to protect guests at international properties, ranging from armed guards to concrete barriers and metal detectors.

But the car bomb explosion which occurred Tuesday at the 2-year-old JW Marriott in Jakarta highlights growing challenges faced by the tourism industry in appearing inviting to travelers but forbidding to terrorists.

Many international hotels and resorts have since implemented toughened security measures. However some security professionals say U.S. hoteliers still have not taken adequate safeguards at home.

(Elliot Blair Smith)

German Airline Resumes Flights to Afghan Capital



Kabul, Aug 6 (Reuters) - A German airline on Wednesday became the first Western European carrier to resume direct flights to Kabul after more than two decades of war and a ban imposed by Afghanistan's one-time occupier, the then Soviet Union.

An Airbus 330-200 belonging to LTU International Airways flew into Kabul with about 150 passengers from Dusseldorf, where the company has its base and from where it plans to fly each Tuesday overnight to the Afghan capital.

Xinhua Photo

US-Singapore Free Trade Deal Clears Final Hurdle

Singapore, Aug 1 (Dow Jones) - After stumbling over issues concerning capital flows and chewing gum, a landmark free trade agreement between the U.S. and Singapore has crossed its final hurdle and is just five months short of becoming a reality.

The U.S. Senate late Thursday voted 66-32 in favor of the agreement, the first between the U.S. and an Asian country, which covers annual trade valued about US\$33 billion.

The deal, to be effective by January, would eliminate tariffs totaling more than US\$100 million a year on products that Singapore exports to the U.S. It also would give U.S. companies greater access to banking, insurance and other services in Singapore, a Southeast Asian business hub.

The Singapore government Friday welcomed the approval saying the pact would increase the flow of trade, investment, talent, ideas, and technology across the Pacific.

Singapore's Minister for Trade and Industry George Yeo said in a statement Friday: "The USSFTA (U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement) opens a new chapter in the bilateral economic relation between the U.S. and Singapore, and builds on the robust economic ties between the two countries."

The plan for the landmark deal first took root in November 2000 during the Clinton administration. The talks initially stalled when President George W. Bush came into office, but were revived last year when Bush was granted Trade Promotion Authority by the U.S. Congress.

"Congressional passage of the USS-

FTA brings to a close the work which we began more than two years ago with the launch of negotiations," said Singapore's ambassador-at-large Tommy Koh, the republic's chief negotiator for the FTA, in the same statement.

The deal is Singapore's fifth such agreement after having sealed similar ties with Japan, Australia, New Zealand and the European Free Trade Association.

Although issues like the repatriation of U.S. funds from Singapore in a crisis and the city-state's decades-old ban on chewing gum created minor stumbling blocks, Singapore's heavy reliance on trade - particularly with the U.S. - meant there was little doubt it would make concessions to push the deal through.

Analyst's Take:

The US-Singapore Free Trade Pact represents the continuous free trade policy initiated by the Clinton Administration. The Bush Administration has carried on by opening the market to other countries, propelling its economy by enlarging exports. This strategic process was confirmed when Congress gave the president Trade Promotion Authorization rights in August 2002 by passing the 2002 Trade Pact.

In light of the expanding global free trade pact and Regional Trade Arrangement, US companies will forfeit a number of export opportunities. Because of its worldwide competitive edge, the US previously remained aloof from bilateral free trade agreements. However it will actively establish the

Free Trade Area of America by the end of 2005 in an attempt to challenge the European Union and East Asian business circles.

Asia is not only the key export region of the US, but also the key region where it hopes to intervene politically by promoting nuclear non-proliferation and by fighting terrorism. However given the recent World Trade Organization multi-lateral discussions, the Asia Pacific Economic Conference has become a new trade forum. Non-binding principles have also prevented convenient procedures for trade and investment, so the US has turned to bilateral free trade agreements with Asian countries in order to push forward its foreign trade policies with multi-lateral, regional and bilateral cooperation.

The success of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Zone depends highly on the US. It encourages the US to choose Singapore, an ASEAN country which has achieved high economic progress and its own trade surplus. Through a mutually beneficial arrangement promoting trade and investment, the China-ASEAN pact will serve as a model for other Asian economies. Outstanding performance by the US will force competitive Asian products to lose market share in the US and provoke US capital inflow. On the other hand, the emerging economic model will encourage other Asian countries to consider intensifying the process of signing bilateral free trade ties with the US, as in the case of South Korea (ROK).

- Wang Youli, researcher, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation

Shelters Offer Temporary Refuge for Homeless

By Yu Shanshan

Four new shelters built for homeless people in Beijing, located in Chaoyang, Haidian, Fengtai and Shijingshan districts, opened their doors last Friday, when a new national regulation on aiding the urban homeless took effect. Only four people turned up to stay in the structures on their first day of operation.

The new regulation that gave rise to the shelters, The Measures on Aid and Management for Urban Homeless and Beggars, was approved by the State Council in mid-July. According to that document, homeless people that cannot feed themselves, do not receive minimum living allowance and do not have any

friends, relatives or other people they can turn to for refuge can receive aid at the new stations.

Homeless people can stay at the shelters for no more than 10 days, according to a statement issued by the Civil Affairs Bureau of Beijing on July 31. Shelter employees will try to track down and contact the families of their "guests" or get in touch with the civil affairs departments of their hometowns to try to make more permanent living arrangements for them.

People who make a living from begging or show no inclination of seeking regular employment are not eligible for aid, according to the bureau.

Before the new regulation

went into effect, it was common practice in big cities to collect homeless people, defined in the previous relevant regulation of 1982 as "those without legal papers, a normal dwelling place or normal means of support" and place them in temporary confinement in closed facilities before shipping them back to their home areas.

The new shelters, therefore, are believed to represent a significant reform in treatment of the indigent. Zhang Changqing, a social worker employed at the Chaoyang shelter, said, "Homeless people can now come to shelters at their own free will, instead of being forced to do so by officials." Photo by Wang Wei



A worker hangs the sign for the Chaoyang shelter in Jinzhan County.



A determined fan gets an autograph from Raul Gonzalez during a Real Madrid training session on August 1, in a Real Madrid training.

Photo by Yin Nan

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Last Saturday was an exciting day for Beijing's football fans, as it was the date of the anxiously awaited match between the Chinese Dragons, a team of domestic stars, and celebrated Spanish team Real Ma-

drid. Following their 4-0 victory in the game, the Real players set out for the next stop in their Asian tour, Tokyo, Japan.

The super team, which boasts three FIFA footballers of the year, Luis Figo, Ronaldo and Zinedine Zidane, along with newly-signed

megastar David Beckham, received a royal welcome when they arrived in Beijing on August 1. Hundreds of fans greeted them at the airport, while even more lined the streets en route to the Beijing Hotel where they stayed, hoping to catch just a glimpse of their

football heroes.

After the team departed the capital, an auction of some Real players' personal items was held at the Beijing Hotel. Among the goods sold were sweat-scented pajamas worn by Beckham that went for 2,800 yuan.

Kids Find Croc in Local Creek

By Zhao Bin

In an event straight out of a B-movie, last Tuesday some local children playing in a small river in suburban Beijing were shocked to discover a crocodile swimming in the same waters.

Fortunately for them, the reptile was just a baby, measuring less than one meter long. "The crocodile suddenly poked its head out of the water a meter away from us," said one of the children, "it went away after I tried to touch it with a stick, but it came back again later."

After hearing the news, a local man named Zheng Jian patiently waited at the banks of the river for further sign of the croc, and managed to capture it with a large fishing net the next day.

"Children in this village love to play in the river. This animal posed a real threat to them," said Zheng, as quoted in a report in the *Beijing Times* on Tuesday.

After placing the crocodile safely in a large tank in his yard, Zheng phoned the Beijing Zoo and Beijing Wildlife Protection Office (BWPO). Employees of the BWPO arrived at his house on Tuesday and took the croc back to their office, where it is still being held.

Wang Minzhong, director of the BWPO, told *Beijing Today*, "It is a Siamese crocodile, genus *Crocodylus Siamensis*, and must have escaped from a nearby farm."

There are two aquaculture farms operating near the river that breed crocodiles. Zheng directly contacted these farms to see if the croc-at-large had escaped from their premises, but the management of both facilities completely denied any involvement or responsibility.

Sketchy Business at Lost Wallet Offices

Lost and found companies sprout in China

By Yu Shanshan

On July 25, a Mr. Fang of Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province, paid the new Xuzhou Credit Lost and Found Company 100 yuan to return his driver's license, ID card and other documents he had lost earlier. A few similar firms have sprung up around the country recently, but whether their activities are a form of public service or a form of extortion is a question yet to be resolved.

The first of these retrieval specialists to open in China was the 007 Company, founded in Shenzhen this January. In the past two months, other lost and found companies have been set up in Wuhan, Hubei Province, and Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province.

"Unlike standard lost and found counters at train stations and shopping malls, we go out and use every clue at our disposal until we find the owner of an item. At the same time, people can hire us to find their lost possessions," Li Qian, founder and manager of the Xuzhou company told *Beijing Today*.

Li De'en, one of the firm's five employees added that most clients are people who have lost something and need help, not people who have picked up lost items and sent them to the company.

The companies earn money by charging "rewards". For example, if a person

found an ID card and sent it to the Li's company, the firm would give them a small payment of around 25 percent of the eventual reward, which would total around 20 yuan for such an item. When the owner of the item was found, the company would offer to return the card for the 20 yuan "reward".

If the lost item was a sum of money, Li told *Beijing Today*, they would ask for three percent to 20 percent of the total, depending on the size of the sum. If the firm could not locate the owner of a found possession within one month, the item would be sent back to the person who found it or forwarded to the local public safety bureau.

Public reaction to these companies has been mixed. As one Internet surfer wrote in a chatroom on the issue, "These kinds of companies may actually encourage thieves to steal things and then earn money from it!"

Many lawyers also have their doubts. According to item 93 of the General Principles of Civil Law, finders of lost items have the right to ask owners for necessary payments for return of those items. However, Chen Anwen, a lawyer with the Xuzhou Hejia Lawyers' Office, emphasized that the "necessary payments" mean payments to the finder's costs for keeping the item and locating its owner, not rewards.

Online Potter Translation Beats Official Version

By Dong Nan

Two months after the record-setting launch of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, the newest installment in British novelist J.K. Rowling's massively popular Harry Potter series, a Chinese version has turned up on the Internet. The legality of this amateur translation, done by domestic Potter fans, is not completely clear, but it has generally met a warm welcome from Chinese readers.

The translation was finished earlier this month by a group of unpaid devotees of the Harry Potter series, after a crash effort that sped along at astonishing speeds of up to 10,000 Chinese characters a day. This informal Chinese version of the book started showing up on a domestic Potter fan page in serial form in early July and was quickly copied by other websites.

The People's Literature Publishing House, the official Chinese translator and publisher of the book, announced last Wednesday that the completed, authorized translation of *Harry Potter and the*

Order of the Phoenix would be released this September. "Our three expert translators are still hard at work," Sun Shunlin, director of the publishing house, told *Beijing Youth Daily* the same day.

Since the People's Literature Publishing House does not hold exclusive publishing rights for electronic versions of the book, the Internet translation does not constitute a copyright infringement. Moreover, national intellectual property right law is not clear on matters of Internet publications.

Sun said, "Our publishing house is not planning to pursue any legal action against the amateur translators."

More than 50 percent of the participants in a poll conducted by www.hoolee8.com, one of China's largest unofficial Harry Potter fan pages, said they liked People's Literature's translations of the earlier Harry Potter books, and more than 80 percent said they plan on buying a copy of the official Chinese version of the new novel.

Former Museum Leader Charged for Banged-up Bronze

By Chen Si

Damage done to a priceless ancient bronze container damaged within the safety of the Hubei Museum in Wuhan, Hubei Province over three years ago led to the leveling of charges against several people at the end of last month.

Shu Zhimei, former director of the Hubei Museum, was charged with breach of duty by the Wuhan Municipal procuratorate on July 28. Also accused of negligence in the case were Tang Gangmao, former museum vice director, Zhang Hao and Wang Tao from its arts department, and Jiang Hui, who oversaw construction of the faulty exhibition.

The damaged cultural relic at the center of the suit is a bronze piece from the Warring States Period (475-221 BC), found in the tomb for the emperor of the ancient Zeng nation in Hubei. It is the only bronze work from that period in China.

A report in the *Wuhan Morning Post* on Monday quoted Fu Jianzhong, public procurator of the

Wuhan Municipal Procuratorate, as saying, "On February 6, 2000, a glass display case weighing over 50 kilograms and set high into a wall crashed onto the piece, badly damaging it."

According to the procuratorate, the accident was caused by inferior construction and installation of the case by Wuhan-based Heng Hui Decoration and Designation Ltd. In 1998, the company signed a contract worth over 1 million yuan to build that display and others in the museum. The project was actually illegal on several counts, as it was done without proper permits or appropriate supervision and quality checks, plus the contract itself violated a national law that stipulates that public bidding must be held for interior decoration projects of government-owned or public facilities valued at 500,000 yuan or more.

Since the incident, the Hubei Museum has spent 392,400 yuan to improve the structural solidity and safety of all other inset display cases in its exhibition halls.



Kin One, left, and actor Li Yapeng unveil the Harley Davidson Soft Tail Heritage Classic.

Photo by Qu Liyan

Happy Birthday to Hogs and Easy Riders

By Ivy Zhang

Amid ooh and aahs, red wines, applause and camera flashes, a brand-new Harley Davidson Soft Tail Heritage Classic motorcycle, a reproduction of a beloved 1984 model, was unveiled last Sunday in Beijing.

It was one of two Harley bikes delivered to the capital for an eight-day tour around China that started last Sunday. Dozens of Chinese and foreign Harley fans, some decked out in full biker gear, congregated at the Chrome Horse Harley Motor Club to witness the unveiling and celebrate the hundredth birthday of their favorite motorcycle maker and the tenth anniversary of the founding of the club.

The only person at the party actually from Harley Davidson's birthplace of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was Tim Baker, founder of the Philip Hayden Foundation. "My hometown is famous for three

things: jeans, beer and Harleys," he said. "I started riding motorcycles when I was 11-years-old. I had my first Harley when I was 18, about 30 years ago."

The organizer of the event was Kin One or Qin Han, a Chinese Harley fanatic who runs the Chrome Horse Harley Motor Club and has operated a Harley motorcycle maintenance and service store for 10 years. He and a few other club members are planning to go to the US later this month to take part in the "Drive Home," a 3,840-kilometer organized group ride that will take them from Los Angeles through Arizona, Oklahoma and Kansas on the way to the final destination of Milwaukee. The local bikers are also excited about taking part in a huge party in that city on August 31 to celebrate the motorcycle-maker's centennial that will draw nearly 1 million riders from around the world.



Lu with his diploma

Photos by Huashang Daily

Born a Scholar, Made a Butcher

By Dong Nan

38-year-old Lu Buxuan enjoyed his two days of fame on July 26 and 27, when the Chinese media reported his story: top-ranking student in the college entrance examination in Chang'an, Shaanxi province in 1985, graduate of the Chinese language department of Beijing University in 1989, the once acclaimed scholar is now a poor little butcher.

After graduating from Beijing University, Lu was assigned to a diesel oil machine factory in Chang'an, until the factory closed down several years later. Then unemployed, Lu tried his hand at a number of trades including selling furniture and a drugstore, but all ended in failure. Finally in 2000, Lu just managed to survive by opening a modest butcher shop.

"I can't afford to talk about grand words such as 'ideal', but it might not be so bad if I can be a good butcher," Lu told *Huashang Daily* with a bitter smile. However, he also confided that his strongest interest and most suitable job might be "dictionary compiling."

Lu's extensive media coverage won him nationwide compassion and concern. Many colleges and institutes, including Xi'an Science and Technology University and Performing Arts College of the Shanghai Movie Factory, offered him a job as a Chinese teacher. Lu's alma mater, Beijing University, also expressed concern and the desire to help. Suddenly faced with so many opportunities, Lu admitted to feeling "a bit dazzled."

What does Lu's story say about today's society? Is one's diploma indifferent to one's fate? Should honor students be butchers too? Opinions follow:

Who is to blame?

Yang Taike, corporate engineer

Lu may have been a No.1 student, but past glory does not mean present success. I think the man is just a loser who couldn't keep up with the times.

A man of true talent can overcome any obstacle in any environment, but it doesn't seem to be the case with Lu. For example, Lu has absolutely no sense or spirit of competition. Although he is unsatisfied with the status quo, he makes no practical efforts to change the situation. What kind of man doesn't even have the determination to improve his own life as a

"I can't afford to talk about grand words such as 'ideal', but it might not be so bad if I can be a good butcher,"

capable individual? Who is to blame?

No one but himself, that's for sure.
Tian Yongqiang, director of general section, Educational Administration department, Beijing University

I often tell my students, what you learn in university is like flour. After your graduate, the society provides you with water. How will you blend your flour with water, and what kind of bread will you make? It's all up to you.

University graduates must willingly and actively find their place in society, and not just rely on academic knowledge. If you cannot adapt yourself to meet the demands of society, if you cannot blend the flour of education with the water of society, how can you blame either one?

Lee, retired official

The employment situation is harder these days. Many of this year's university graduates can't find jobs directly related to their majors, let alone a graduate of the 1980's. It's pretty common.

People often talk about the "shortage of talent." I think China lacks specialists primarily in the science and technology fields; the "shortage" is not so serious in the humanities, such as Chinese language, history and philosophy. We may lack "great masters" such as novelists, but there is generally a surplus of ordinary humanities graduates. It's a kind of structural problem.

Yu, student of Beijing University

Lu has only himself to blame for his dilemma. However we must also admit



Lu in his butcher shop

that our social human resource system has many flaws. For example, the system of registered permanent residence greatly restricts opportunities for many talented people.

Ironically, people talk about the "shortage of talent" everyday, but most leaders pay no attention at all to talented people. In the elementary school of my hometown, mere junior high school graduates are hired as teachers by high-ranking officials. But my cousin, who graduated from a technical secondary school, was refused because he didn't have the proper "background". Lu's situation may stem from the same problem.

Who cares?

Zhao Jingjing, student of Beijing University

The media only pays attention to students from the highbrow universities, Beijing University or Tsinghua. I don't think a degree from Beijing University means anything—not in terms of a brilliant future anyway.

If the media focuses on one guy just because he graduated from Beijing University, with total disregard for his true ability, personal effort and individual personality, then I think it's just senseless and unfair.

Zhou Yun, high school teacher

I think the media pays too much attention to all those "No.1 students in college entrance examination." Chinese people are obsessed with diplomas, and exams are still crucial to

one's life. But I believe with the popularization of education, more people will have the opportunity to attend colleges and universities, so exams will be less important, and those "No.1 examinees" and "Beijing University graduates" will not be so special. In any case, scoring high on exams certainly won't guarantee your success in life.

Ji Zixu, Beijing University student

Actually, Lu just may be a victim of his own personality. These days, many people aren't really doing a job they like or that is suitable to their educational level and ability, for various reasons. It's a great waste of human resource and a serious social problem.

That's why Lu's dramatic fall from Beijing University graduate to butcher has attracted so much concern. His story offers both the media and the public the opportunity to discuss individual potential in our society. In other words, I think people are using his case to elaborate their own ideas.

Why shouldn't a Beijing University graduate be a butcher?

Yu

Of course it's a waste. A university education still costs a fair amount of money in this country. If Lu was going to be a butcher, then why did he bother with a four-year Beijing University education which could not even serve his career? He should have picked up his butcher knife earlier.

Zhou Yun

Chinese university graduates are not so superfluous that they have to work as butchers. The government should do something about that. I think it would be great if everyone could work in the most suitable position.

Tian Yongqiang

Traditional ideas remain, such as "a good student should work as an official" and "study is supreme." Today they are groundless. The society needs a wide range of people, university students among many. Students can be butchers too.

Lee

It is not an easy task to be a good butcher. Many special skills are needed. If Lu can adapt "high technology" to his trade, he might even get rich! There are "No.1" individuals in every trade, not only in examinations. A successful butcher may even earn more money and win higher respect than a common editor.

SOUND BITES

"I am just a cat, not a fat cat, just a cat."
— Innocencio Arias, Spain's U.N. ambassador.

The "fat cats" to which Arias refers are the permanent five members — the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China. Arias has insisted he plays far better soccer than his American counterpart but feels like a "tourist" on the Security Council, meandering among the big powers.

"Soccer is the only big thing in the world where the United States doesn't run the show. The show is run by the Brazilians, the Spaniards, the Italians, the British," he said. *"There are no permanent members in soccer; fortunately."*

"I hope this implies a new political will, a will that, I think, has been absent among the international community. But now that this resolution is passed, I hope we will move ahead with urgent and determined action to help the Liberian people."

— Kofi Annan, U.N. Secretary-General.

The U.N. Security Council voted late Friday to authorize a multinational force to help end fighting in war-battered Liberia and maintain security after President Charles Taylor steps down. France, Germany and Mexico abstained from the vote.

"We're going to interview everyone we can that we think can shed new light on the investigation, whenever we can."

— John Ashcroft, Attorney General of US.

US investigators probing the September 11 attacks will question a Saudi national suspected of having close ties to two of the 19 airline hijackers who took part in the strikes.

The official referred to the matter as a "counter-intelligence" probe in an indication that, despite repeated Saudi denials, the theory that Bayoumi was a Saudi government agent has not been entirely discarded.

"We see this as a blessing. It will be sunny afterwards."

— George Marshall, local resident of West Point, Liberia.

The first West African forces arrived in Liberia on Monday, launching an international mission to end 14 years of carnage and oversee departure of warlord-turned-president Charles Taylor.

Nigerian soldiers in green camouflage and flak vests leapt out of the first U.N. helicopter as it settled onto the tarmac at Liberia's main airport.

Some people in West Point had made T-shirts to welcome the foreign soldiers, seen by many as saviors in a city plunged into humanitarian catastrophe as rebels battled President Charles Taylor's forces for more than two weeks.

By Chen Si

Beijingers Rank Fifth Nationwide in First Half Year Income

By Lu Chun/Tony Shaw

Surprisingly, Beijingers earned just a little less than residents of the provincial city of Ningbo, in Zhejiang, during the first half year of 2003, according to the latest investigation by the National Bureau of Statistics revealed on July 31.

With an average resident income of 7,039.66 yuan for the first half year, Beijing ranks fifth among 35 investigated cities nationwide, just behind Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Shanghai and Ningbo. Shenzhen crowns the chart with an average income of 12,373.43 yuan, while Ningbo is the only medium-sized city in the top five.

Shenzhen struts its stash

"Shenzhen people have always been the top money-makers, ever since the 1990s," observed Wang Youjuan, director of the Residents Investigation Division of the Bureau's City Investigation General Team. The Special Economic Zone is unlikely to give up its position, as Shenzhen is still 4,592 yuan ahead of its runner-up Guangzhou.

Wang offered two reasons for Shenzhen's high income level. First, Shenzhen has a solid foundation for development, so although its economy may be currently slowing down, residents' income is not affected. Second, Shenzhen is also the first Chinese city to have launched the reform to convert welfare into cash, so reforms on housing and social insurance, such as converting officials' use of private vehicles into monthly payments, continue to fuel household income.

Ningbo earns its keep

"Ningbo is not a dark horse this time," said Wang. Residents of both Ningbo and Beijing have shared virtually the same level of income for the past two years. In the first half year, Ningbo people earned only 133 yuan more than Beijingers, and under 300 yuan less than the Shanghaiese.

Private business is the leading source of Ningbo residents' growth in income, wrote *Beijing Youth Daily* on August 1. The Ningbo Bureau of Statistics counted 210,000 industrial and commercial enterprises in the city in 2002, 54,352 of which are privately owned and which contributed to around 90 percent of the city's gross domestic product (GDP) of 125.8 billion yuan last year.

East coast rules

Ningbo is not the only medium-sized city closing the income gap with big cities. The eastern coastal cities of Hangzhou, Xiamen and Qingdao

also rank among the top 15. Residents of certain medium-sized cities earn even more than some municipalities, often cities located on China's economically booming east coast.

Wang said private capital in these eastern cities is especially robust, which is the biggest difference between big cities whose economy is dominated by traditional state-owned enterprises. Medium-sized cities in the eastern coastal region, such as Hangzhou and Qingdao, have more private businesses and joint ventures, and less historical problems and debt burdens than traditionally industrial cities, such as Harbin and Shenyang.

Western regions stagger

The top 15 cities are all located in the eastern and central regions, while the gap in residents' income between cities in the eastern and western regions continues to increase. Shenzhen people earn 8,953 yuan more than people in the lowest ranking city located in China's Northwest.

The National Bureau revealed in another list that all the cities and provinces with residents earning over 5,000 yuan in the first semester are located in the eastern regions: Shanghai (7,416 yuan), Beijing (7,040 yuan), Zhejiang (6,945 yuan), Guangdong (6,499 yuan) and Fujian (5,257).

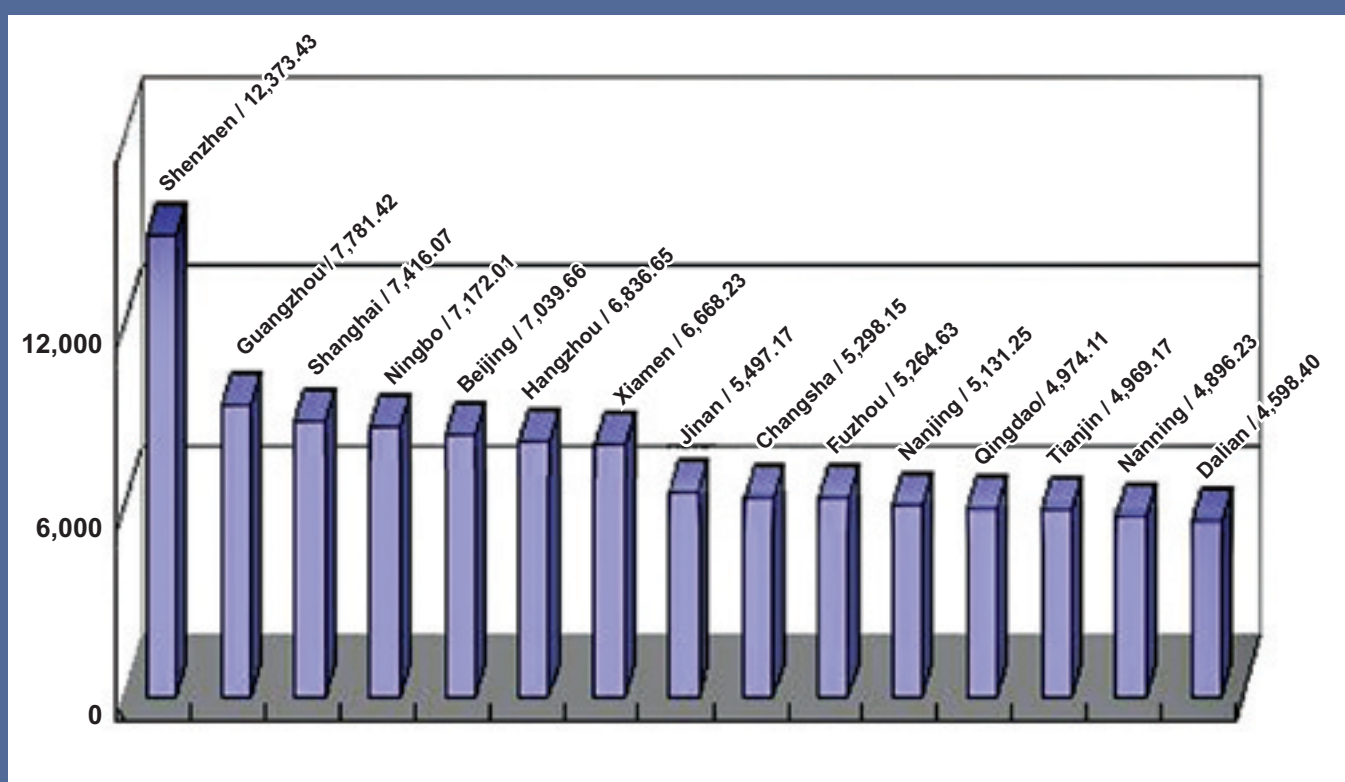
The income growth rate in eastern regions is 9.9 percent, and in the central regions 9.4 percent. In the western regions however, the figure is only 6.1 percent, far below the national average of 9.0 percent. Residents of the western regions spent an average of 3,179 yuan in the first half year, 1,202 yuan less than those in the eastern regions.

National average rises

The general average income growth for all the investigated city residents was 4,301 yuan, a 9.0 percent rise over the same period last year, which drops to 8.4 percent once the price rise factor has been taken into account.

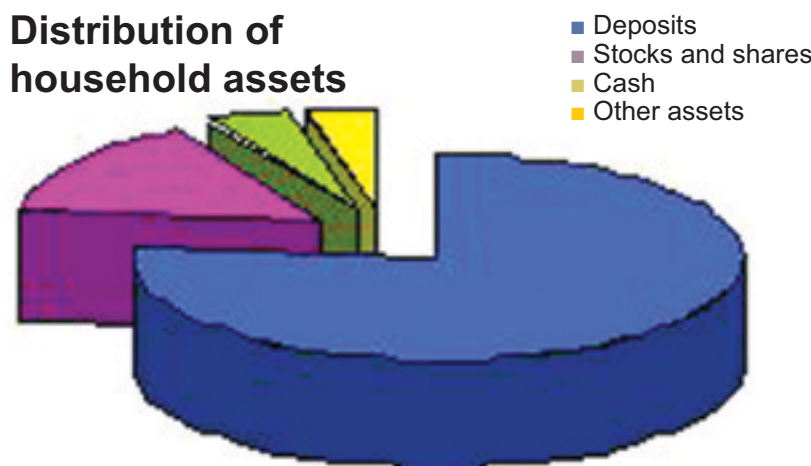
Salary remains the main source of residents' income, rising to 3,254.4 yuan, representing 89.1 percent of their income growth. The Bureau gave the following reasons for the salary rise: the increase of local subsidiary policies in Beijing, Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Zhejiang, Guangdong and Hunan; the central government's decision not to cut salaries and even add subsidiaries for a few industries during the SARS-hit period; and the rapid growth of social welfare and unemployment insurance payment.

The 15 top cities in terms of average resident income



Tenfold Gap in Urban Purchasing Power

Distribution of household assets



Household purchasing power

Household careers	Average purchasing power (yuan)
Average	128,145
Private business owners	1,072,643
Ccompany managers	237,329
Technicians	118,266
Clerks	92,458
Others	80,378
Service industry employees	68,260
Manufacturing, transportation employees	61,651
Commerce industry employees	57,119

Household assets in terms of income

	Average	Low-income	Lower-middle	Middle-income	Higher-middle	High-income
Household ratio (%)	100	20	20	20	20	20
Purchasing power	128,145	27,295	64,073	123,020	140,690	285,379
Bank deposit	98,267	24,565	49,135	93,450	124,420	199,765

By Tony Shaw

The gap in purchasing power between the capital city's high-income and low-income households is now tenfold. Meanwhile, urban households' average purchasing power continues to rise at an annual rate of 21.9 percent.

The figures, released on July 21 by the City Investigation Team of the Beijing Bureau of Statistics, also showed that Beijing had an average purchasing power of 4,893 yuan per household in 1991, and excluding the price rise factor, the figure climbed to 128,100 yuan this year.

Privately owned and family businesses top the list, with a household income 19 times more than the household group with the lowest purchasing power.

Experts from the team announced an important risk, as the 19.92 percent annual increase in household deposit during the past 20 years largely surpasses the economic growth rate. The stable growth in deposit may allow for the smooth operation of China's banking system, but it also indicates a low consumption rate.

Experts listed several causes for the high growth in deposit: a narrow investment channel, delayed consumption due to price speculation, saturation of high-income households with no access to investment, poor stock market performance leading to deposited capital, and no culture of consumption on credit.

Purchasing power still needs a boost, and if a low consumption rate continues to linger behind a high household reserve, not only sound investment cycles, production and consumption, but also the growth of the entire national economy will suffer, warned *Beijing Star Daily* on July 22. Analysts say stimulating consumer activity will be the next big challenge for the Chinese government this year.

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Hana-Bi, Killer Fireworks

By Ivy Zhang

On July 28, Guoxi Fireworks plant in Guoxin, Hebei province accidentally exploded, resulting in 32 deaths and 91 people injured. About 169 workers were inside the plant at the time of the explosion.

Investigations revealed that the cause of the accident was the extensive drying of gunpowder in the nearby drying compound of the plant, where ready-to-blast fireworks were also stored. According to Xinhua News Agency, this operation clearly violated safety regulations.

More than 20 tons of remaining flammable materials were destroyed in three controlled detonations over six days before the explosion site was finally cleared up on August 3.

Explosions in Xinji

On July 30, two days after the accident, a *Beijing Youth Daily* reporter visited Guoxi Fireworks Plant in an attempt to understand the fateful chain of events.

A firefighter says they received the alarm at 18:10 on July 28. The first explosion occurred at 18:08. Within the next few minutes, six more large-scale explosions succeeded, eventually destroying the entire plant.

First the site was sealed off, as police set up guard lines about 150 meters away from the center

“We are always aware of the risk of accidents occurring at the plant. It was such a hot day, over 40 degrees! How can people make fireworks in that heat? As for the gunpowder, of course it is highly inflammable. But the workers have no choice.”



Rescue at the scene of Guoxi Fireworks Plant explosion

Xinhua Photo

of the explosion and evacuated the villagers.

Early on firefighters cleared off a basic road and piled up dozens of hillocks along each side. Smoke could be seen from some hillocks. As firefighters walked into the ruins, they heard a cracking sound. An unnamed firefighter on the scene warned that some fireworks were still hidden under the hillocks and

might explode anytime.

The fire caused by the explosion was finally extinguished at 8:00 on July 30.

On site, a two-story building is partly collapsed, and a car stopped in front of the building is scorched. The nearly 7.4 hectares compound has been practically razed to the ground.

Search and rescue missions con-

tinue among the debris. One firefighter presses a wet towel against his mouth and nose as he searches the ashes and waste. “I’ve been through here five or six times already, but I still want to keep on looking, just in case someone is buried underneath.” During the two days following the explosion, relatives of victims never ceased to inquire, as they received missing

persons reports everyday.

On the side of a road near the plant, the local government has set up a sign-up post for missing persons. A woman at the post sheds tears of fading hope. “I haven’t found my parents in the past two days. What’s the use of signing-up?”

Fireworks and aftershocks

State regulations for fireworks production prohibit the drying of gunpowder in temperatures above 35 degrees Celsius. On the day of the Guoxi Firework Plant explosion, the thermometer rose to 37 degrees in 93% humidity. In this excessive heat, there was no surprise that the gunpowder auto-ignited and exploded.

The following day, Hebei authorities ordered all firework plants to halt production and submit to general safety examinations in an effort to eradicate all further risks of injury.

Meanwhile, four people involved in the explosion were arrested, of which two plant managers and two production safety supervisors. Cao Hongjin, president of No.1 Hospital in Xinji, was fired after requesting an injured victim to pay an 800-yuan deposit prior to treatment.

All injured people will be treated free of charge, and medical bills will be covered by the local government. Relatives of the deceased will also receive due compensation according to regulations, says Zhang Fawang, deputy major of Shijiazhuang.

At 9:15 on August 1, a total of 18 tons of remaining flammable raw materials were successfully detonated under the pouring rain at Guoxi Fireworks Plant.

All of this material was found at gunpowder warehouses during the clearing-up process, after the initial explosion had broken through the warehouse roofs, exposing much of the gunpowder to rain on July 30. As piles of damp gunpowder are chemically prone to auto-ignite, the leading response team decided to destroy all remaining fireworks on site.

At 5:00 on August 1, more than 100 village leaders and police evacuated nearby villagers and workers. One hour later, over a hundred policemen stood guard 650 meters away from the detonation site. Meanwhile, an unexpected downpour put the planned detonation 45 minutes ahead of schedule at 9:15.

Two roaring blasts were heard, followed by three less powerful booms.

Guoxi Firework Plant in Xinji city was established in 1984 with the approval of the Chinese Public Security Ministry. It is a share-holding company with 220 registered staff, which consists of local peasants doing odd jobs during the peak production time. Yang Yixing, the legal representative of the plant, died in the explosion.

Due to the high mobility of the workers, it is difficult to estimate the exact number of staff employed at the plant.

Other blasts

Three days after the Xinji explosion, at 7:59 in the morning of July 31, Jingxi Fireworks Plant in Jingxi town, Minhou county, Fujian province exploded, resulting in 5 deaths and over 36 people injured.

By the time a Dongnan Kuai Bao reporter arrived on site about

one hour later, the 1,000-square-meter plant compound was razed flat. Dozens of nearby trees were burned down to bare bark.

More than 30 local police sealed off the site, and three fire trucks arrived at the scene. Only rescue workers were permitted entry.

During five hours of on site interviews, the reporter noted 17 ‘aftershock’ explosions.

“I was watching TV at the time,” recalls a villager surnamed Xiao. “All of a sudden, I was shaken by roaring blasts. I thought it might be an earthquake.”

Xiao lives in Guankou village about 1,000 meters away from the fireworks plant. Stirred to his feet by the blasts, Xiao rushed outside, hearing the windows crack behind him. From his courtyard home, Xiao saw a huge mushroom cloud envelop the sky in darkness.

The explosions shook up villages as far as one or two kilometers away from the plant. Many more windows were shattered, and dozens of houses collapsed within a 500-meter radius, leaving just as many villagers injured and hospitalized.

Zheng Falian, a worker at the fireworks plant, suffered fractures from the explosion, but is on his way to recovery. His wife, who also works at the plant, was fortunately off that day. She says they work the morning shift from 5 am to 10 am. Because of the hot weather, many people choose to start work earlier so that they can go home earlier.

“We are always aware of the risk of accidents occurring at the plant,” says a relative of Zheng. “It was such a hot day, over 40 degrees! How can people make fireworks in that heat? As for the gunpowder, of course it is highly inflammable. But the workers have no choice. If they don’t go to work now, the boss won’t let them come back when the days are cooler.”

According to the villagers, the plant has a history of over 20 years. Usually little more than 30 workers are needed to staff the plant, but at the time of the explosion, many extra hands were working overtime.

By this Thursday, the death toll stands at five, while search and rescue work are still underway. Public security bureaus, as well as safety supervision bureaus and other relevant authorities, pursue on site investigations, hoping to prevent the next big boom.

Background

Partial list of recent firework plant explosions nationwide:

□ June 26, 2003: Private firework plant in Liling, Hunan province - 9 dead, 2 injured.

□ January 18, 2002: illegal firework manufacturer in Chengdu, Sichuan province - 2 dead, 3 injured.

□ January 10, 2002: Da An firework plant in Qiyang county, Hunan province - 6 dead, 7 injured.

□ December 30, 2001: Pan Da firework plant in Wan Zai county, Jiangxi province - 14 dead, 61 injured, 2 missing.

□ June 30, 2000: Tu Chu firework plant in Jiangmen, Guangdong province - 37 dead, 12 injured.

By Ivy Zhang

Ever since Tyler Durden showed you how to make soap, you may be afraid to ask what happens to medical waste. You should be.

Late last month, *China Central Television Station* (CCTV) revealed the truth about the illegal disposal and misuse of medical waste in its program *Weekly Quality Report*.

Red-listed as China’s No.1 hazardous waste, medical waste must officially be collected, disinfected and burned according to strict regulations. However CCTV’s *Weekly Quality Report* disclosed that medical waste is unofficially processed and recycled into food and beverage containers.

Scavenging for needles

Acting on a tip that medical waste was indiscriminately piled together with organic waste at Beijing’s Changfeng Hospital, CCTV reporters went on site to inspect. They observed that garbage collectors routinely showed up at the bins behind the hospital buildings between 6 am and 7 am every morning.

Curiously, the collectors specifically picked out medical waste in the form of disposed needles, liquid transfusion bags and stained blood bags.

What becomes of this medical waste? CCTV reporters followed the scavengers to an unnamed garbage collection post in Haidian district.

There they found large piles of plastic waste, mixed with used needles and tainted liquid transfusion bottles. One dealer offered the price of 0.2 yuan for a clean liquid transfusion bottle and 2 yuan for one kilo of needles. Liquid transfusion pipes were bought more cheaply.

Recycling for profit

But where does the medical waste go? CCTV reporters followed a truck loaded with plastic waste headed out of town.

Two hours later, the truck entered Wen An county in Hebei province, passing lines of collection and processing posts, as well as plastic production plants, one by one on either side of the road. Traffic was heavy with many more such trucks, fully loaded with plastic waste.

The plastic market, located in the Yin village of Wen An county, Hebei province, is one of the largest markets for plastic waste treatment in the north of China.

Here, hundreds of tons of plastic waste are traded everyday. A popular local saying expresses the unchallenged prosperity of the recycling business: “No plastic waste goes undisposed in Yin village. No plastic waste remains unsold here.”

Finally, the pursued truck en-

This Bottle is Non-Potable



Medical waste found at the plastic market in Wen An county, Hebei province

tered the market and pulled into a collecting and processing plant. No sooner was the waste unloaded than workers began to filter through the rubbish, picking out needles and setting them aside in a small barrel.

According to the workers, the plastic waste comes from all over China, but more specifically from Beijing and Tianjin. General plastic waste sells for 2,000 yuan per ton, while medical waste such as needles are considered “premium material” due to quality of the material. Clean medical waste can sell for up to 3,000 yuan per ton.

According to the manager of the plant, who prefers to remain anonymous, some of the medical waste is crushed at the hospital before delivery, but other waste must be crushed on site. The plant has the capacity to crush one ton of medical waste per hour, so over 20 tons of plastic waste can be processed at the plant daily.

The plant is only one among many in the village, which reunites hundreds of households and thousands of people. A total 200 tons of waste can be processed daily by these processing plants “available at all villages nearby.”

The sorted waste is crushed twice and then cleansed in a sink with caustic soda and washing

powder. After several cleansings, the dirty sink water turns black, and stained needle pieces can still be identified among the cleansed material.

Mixing the dirty stuff

What happens to the crushed material? A local worker led CCTV reporters to another unnamed plastic production plant.

In the processing workshop, workers fed the grains of crushed needles into a plastic molding machine, which just moments later, spewed out plastic barrels. The workers said the barrels would be delivered to factories in Tianjin to be used as containers for pickles or fermented bean curd.

Many more plastic barrels and bottles were found in the workshop of another plastic production plant. Workers there said the small plastic bottles were used to contain soft drinks, while the big ones were used to contain liquor.

The CCTV reporters observed that the newly produced bottles were darker than usual. Workers confessed that “dirty stuff” was inevitably mixed into the material: “at least one third is ‘dirty stuff.’”

But the head of the plant insisted that “half of the material is good, and the other half is inferior.” As for the inferior material, he claims that “It is recycled material, which is much more cost-efficient.”

Thus plastic waste, including medical waste such as needles, liquid transfusion pipes and blood bags, is transformed into disposable cups, water barrels, liquor barrels and soft drink bottles via simple processing plants in Wen An county, Hebei province.

Identifying hazardous waste

Dong Jingshi, deputy director of China Packaging Resources Use Committee, has been to Wen An county several times.

Dong believes that the people who process the plastic waste initially had no idea of their toxic effect on humans. It was not until five or six years later that they discovered their local water was contaminated and not suitable for drinking. Now locals know better than to use the products they make from plastic waste. Most of their products are exported to far-off southern provinces such as Guangdong or Zhejiang.

Dong pointed out that boiling may kill certain viruses such as colon bacillus, but is ineffective against others, such as the HIV/AIDS virus. In addition, plastic waste contains other harmful substances such as heavy metals. These elements, when incorporated in the packaging material, enter the body along with food or drink and are extremely hazardous.

By Zhao Pu / Zhang Huan

Wang Keqin, senior journalist at *China Economic Times*, notorious muckraker, "Chinese Lincoln Steffens," is also deemed China's most valuable journalist: the criminal syndicate once offered 5 million yuan for his head as he investigated an inside story.

Throughout his professional career, Wang has risked his own life a number of times and suffered both misery and humiliation. But the determined journalist claims he is simply doing his job.

REWARD: 5 million yuan

In late 2000, Wang, then director of the news department of *Gansu Economic Daily*, had already earned himself a reputation in Gansu province for defending the rights of common people. In November of that year, some "stockholders" appealed to him to report on the fraud of the black stock market.

After hearing their complaints, Wang was astonished by the violence of previous cases related to the black stock market. On August 17, 1999, 55-year-old Li Jinghua committed suicide after buying black stocks; in October, 2000, 63-year-old Zhang Dongping was chopped to death by his nephew for buying stocks; on November 24, 2002, several young men beat up stockholders who were trying to appeal to higher authorities at the entrance of the provincial government of Gansu... Why did the black stock market cost so many lives and the destruction of so many families? Wang resolved to uncover the inside story.

Before his undercover investigation, Wang had never bought any stocks and knew next to nothing about the stock market. In order to take on this serious challenge, Wang began to observe stocks and gradually penetrated the black stock market from the inside. He posed as a laid-off worker, a businessman, or a white collar professional, entering and exiting various black markets, connecting with the "managers" or "stockbrokers," until he finally discovered the truth.

The fraud was severe. Ever since 1996, in Lanzhou, capital city of Gansu province, more than 50 black stock markets had robbed locals of 800 to 900 million yuan. Many other cities or towns in Gansu and all around China also hosted such black markets. Several fraud victims had reported the cases and asked for help from higher authorities, but in vain. The victims had no choice but to appeal to the press to seek justice. Some local media had reported the cases, but coverage was terminated after only one or two reports.

As Wang's investigation progressed, the black stock market reacted with a brutal warning: "Break Wang's legs and skin him alive." But Wang refused to be intimidated. In mid-January 2001, he submitted his report, *Black Stock Market Robs Stockholders in Lanzhou* to both *China Economic Times* and *Gansu Economic Daily*. The days that followed were the

Wang (right) receives a family visiting from Shanxi Province, who comes to him for help.

Photos by Aily

As the most notorious muckraking journalist in China, Wang Keqin has risked his own life a number of times and suffered both misery and humiliation throughout his professional career. Once the criminal syndicate even offered five million yuan for his head. But the determined journalist claims he is simply doing his job.



WANTED

Wang Keqin

most horrible for his family. They received threatening calls constantly, and Wang was informed that the criminal syndicate was offering five million yuan for his head.

To ensure the safety of his family, Wang sent his wife and son out of Gansu just before the Spring Festival. On the traditionally festive eve of the lunar new year, he ate instant noodles and frozen dumplings alone, while revising his report in fear.

On February 3, 2002, *China Economic Times* published the scandal, immediately attracting the attention of all media and even the central government. The provincial government then sent related departments to investigate the fraud, and subsequently proved Wang's report to be true.

However, while Wang had not expected any dispute over the report, some leaders in Gansu began expressing opposition. They disapproved of the fact that Wang had not first informed them of the report and claimed it had a negative influence on the image of Gansu and on outside investment. Later, the provincial government held an official press meeting, forbidding the publication in Lanzhou of any further reports on the

black stock market and sharply criticizing Wang's muckraking.

It was not until a journalist from Xinhua News Agency wrote an internal report about Wang's condition, followed by praise from the leader of the central government, that Wang's hard work was finally recognized. **Evil-doers, kneeling villagers, bleeding heart**

Wang's controversial report about the black stock market in Lanzhou drew him many enemies, but it also brought him widespread fame. In late September 2001, Wang received a visit from eight farmers from the town of Baozi in Min County, Gansu province. The farmers knelt down in front of him and asked him for help.

They said the township government of Baozi forced the villagers to publicly pinpoint "evil-doers." If the villagers could not make the quota, they were beaten, and many had been wounded. Wang could not believe his ears. On October 1, he set off for Baozi to see for himself.

Along the way, a heavy rain resulted in severe road conditions. Wang finally arrived at the home of villager Shi Yongke in Shiqi Village at one o'clock in the morning. However immediately after hearing of the journalist's arrival, more

than a dozen villagers came to Shi's home and talked about the election of "evil-doers" until 4 am.

During the following days, Wang visited many more villagers, interviewing people and collecting material. Many of the villagers had fled their hometown because they could not afford the fine and were afraid of being beaten. Cadres of various levels abused the villagers at will. Random villagers were claimed as "evil-doers" without reason.

One example is of 68-year-old Cai Yutian, whose land was destroyed by flood in 1998. He applied for relief, but with no result. In order to survive, he resorted to begging and even sold the hair of his daughter-in-law and granddaughter. When he tried to cultivate a neighboring wasteland, he was issued a fine notice and designated as an "evil-doer." In despair, he swallowed poison to end his life at the gate of

the township government.

On October 3, Wang was climbing a hill to Zina Village, when several villagers came to meet him and knelt down on the hillside crying, "Comrade from the province, we are being wronged! Please help us!" More and more people knelt down on the ground, among them white haired elders, frail children and strong young men. Wang later recalled, "Seeing hundreds of villagers kneeling down in front of me and hearing their cries, my heart bled."

On October 9, after staying in Baozi for seven days and nights, Wang returned to Lanzhou and immediately began writing. Eight days later, Wang's report *The Inside Story of the Designation of Evil-Doers* was published. It was not long before the central government ordered the provincial government of Gansu to send capable cadres to investigate the true condition of the villagers, and the true "evil-doers" of the village were promptly and duly punished. **Taxi drivers, street cleaner, rare journalist**

On December 6, 2002, *China Economic Times* published another one of Wang's muckrakes, *Monopoly Secrets of the Beijing Taxi Trade*.

The subject originated from *China Economic Times*, which also provided complaints and other documents from Beijing taxi drivers. The investigation was another eye-opener for Wang, who initially believed taxi drivers made a good sum of money each day. It was not until after he began interacting with the drivers themselves that Wang realized their many personal hardships.

Wang's strategy was double. On one hand, he called the Beijing Traffic Bureau every day requesting formal

interviews with officers. At the same time, he routinely engaged in informal conversations with taxi drivers. During his investigation, he interviewed over 100 taxi drivers and visited more than a dozen of their families.

He discovered that many taxi drivers were abused and exhausted. One manager of a taxi company came to the hospital to collect money only two hours after a taxi driver underwent an operation, while other taxi companies employed the criminal syndicate to threaten the drivers. In the home of taxi driver Feng Jiyou, Wang witnessed six people of three generations living together in a room of little more than 30 square meters. "When I heard the 70-year-old elders sobbing, I felt grieved."

Other times, as he sat in a taxi restaurant waiting to interview some drivers, other taxi drivers would tease him: "Even high officials cannot solve the problem, how can a journalist like you?" It was at these moments that Wang felt the most grieved for the drivers, because "They had lost even the basic notion of defending their own rights."

Although Wang earns over 1,000 yuan a month, he fought to defend taxi drivers earning over 2,000 yuan a month. Wang remembers how one day, he was very tired and lay down exhausted on a bench on Chang An Avenue. Suddenly a cleaner came up and said, "You lazy worker, get up quick! You should get to work and make some money!" Wang sat up in front of the street cleaner, speechless.

After his report was published, Wang was again threatened by taxi companies and even by governmental departments. Meanwhile, other caring supporters called the newspaper office to give Wang their encouragement. Some readers said: "Please tell Wang to take care of himself. Journalists like him are too few."



Rebels with a Cause?

Mixed response to third Student Theater Festival shows differences of expectations

By Yu Shanshan

The curtains fell in Beijing and Shanghai on the third Student Theater Festival this Monday, concluding not only the series of plays, but also the heated discussion and criticism that surrounded the event.

Yuan Hong, director of the North Theater, creator of the festival and the driving force behind it, responded to the critical responses by saying, "[This festival] should not be treated like a normal drama festival, it is meant to be more of a social activity giving students a forum to express their feelings about society."

The first Student Theater Festival, staged two years ago, included just six plays. The avowed aims of the small event were to encourage the creation of original drama and provide instruction for young drama fans, but many journalists and professionals from China's drama field dismissed it as merely a platform for amateurs to entertain themselves.

This year's event was much larger, with 27 plays staged in Beijing and three in Shanghai over a total of 18 evenings, and attracted surprising crowds. The audience at opening night at the North Theater in the Jiaodaokou area on July 18 was filled with famous actors, directors, drama critics and familiar faces from television.

Speeches before the opening night's shows started stretched so long that the first performance was postponed by half an hour. The delay and the unexpected

crowds seem to have shaken the young actors from Beijing Foreign Languages University, who were clearly nervous as they struggled through two plays, *Juan Niao Gui Chao* (*Tired Birds Go Home*) and *Xiao Kexue Xiao Ai Qing Xiao Quanli Pi Pan* (*The Criticism of Little Science, Little Love and Little Power*).

Many newspaper reports published in the first few days of the festival concentrated on the shortcomings of those initial shows, especially chastising them for being slow and hard to follow. One particular target was Zhang Jiayi, the writer, director and actor of the second play, who carried his script on stage and read from it.

Li Fan, a domestic drama buff and host of the website Fantheatre.com, was among the first critics to attack the event. He was quoted in a Xinhua New Agency article on July 20 as saying, "I was distressed because I did not see anyone on stage with anything approaching a serious attitude. As far as I am concerned, neither of the plays was worthy of getting passing marks."

Such negative response disappointed the organizers of the festival and frustrated the student participants. "To me, it doesn't matter if our play failed or not," said Duan Jianming, writer of *Little*. "But what I can't stand is that people have dismissed the whole festival as bad because of our one performance."

The same plays were run the second evening of the event and went far more smoothly thanks to



A scene from Xiao Kexue Xiao Ai Qing Xiao Quanli Pi Pan (The Criticism of Little Science, Little Love and Little Power), performed by Beijing Foreign Languages University

better acting and audiences dominated by students, not stars. Yet the shadow of the heated reactions to the first night, unprecedented in the two former festivals, seemed to hover over all the following plays.

Attitude differences

From the beginning, Yuan emphasized, the main goal of the festival was not to offer top-quality plays but to provoke and promote communication. All shows were free of charge, and the target audience was people with limited money and chances for going to the theater.

"The real reason these critics and other people did not like the plays is that they are not used to works that have a real sense of social responsibility. They only like ones that emphasize aesthetics or plot-driven stories," Yuan Hong told *Beijing Today* on Saturday in his office. Festival co-organizer Xiao Ling also defended the young actors on the grounds that many have probably never seen a real professional play and they had limited time to prepare.

Aside from a few plays performed on university campuses last year, most of the shows in the festival underwent less than two weeks of rehearsals due to the impact of the SARS outbreak and universities' final exams. Among the crash-rehearsed plays were the opening two from the Foreign Languages University.

"We spent twelve hours every day rehearsing, and the final version of the play was only completed the very morning of the opening. Zhang Jiayi had to take his lines on stage because he had spent almost every day in the weeks before writing and editing the script," Duan recalled.

Claims of difficult conditions, however, have fallen upon many deaf ears among critics. Xinhua

reporter Mao Leilei responded to Yuan's protests by telling *Beijing Youth Daily* that the festival's organizers were incapable of accepting criticism. He said, "They cuddle and protect the student plays just like a mother coddling her children, always emphasizing how hard they have it. But when they grow up, they'll realize how many bad habits they've formed under such spoiling."

Rebels or flakes?

Almost a century ago, Chinese modern drama came to being on university campuses after students came in contact with plays from the West, and it has since become a forum for experimentation with and advancement of drama in this country.

"Students theater predicts the direction of Chinese drama," Guo Qihong, scriptwriter for the prominent Beijing People's Art Theatre, told the festival's participants and organizers in a lecture at the end of the event's last night.

Many of the student viewers seem to have been most interested in seeing challenging, experimental productions. "These plays made me feel excited, they gave me a chance to see something different from professional dramas like [the adaptation of Arthur Miller's] *The Crucible* by Wang Xiaoying," said Fang Lei, a Beijing University student.

Not everyone, however, thought the students stretched the limits of their creative freedom. Craig Quintero, an American director of experimental drama who lives in Taipei, held a five-day workshop for amateur actors at the North Theater during the festival. Afterwards, he told *Beijing Today*, "The biggest problem I found during the workshop is that they have watched too many television soaps."

Pingyao Photography Festival Set to Pop

By Xiao Rong

Ancient ways will stand alongside a new tradition in the historic city of Pingyao in Shaanxi Province in mid-September. The occasion is the staging of the 2003 Pingyao International Photography Festival from September 16 to 22, an event that will cover the town's well-preserved walls with new, outstanding photos.

This will be the third Pingyao Photography Exhibition, and will uphold previous features of an evening slide show and organized sales of some photos, while boasting some attractive new activities, according to an announcement made by the event's organizing committee last Wednesday.

Venues in the town will hold a total of over 5,000 photographs from domestic and overseas photographers, institutions and businesses. The theme of this year's session is life and culture, which will guide the content of over 100 exhibitions.

The start of the Festival will also be marked by the debut of the Pingyao International Photography Museum, which will house outstanding shots from each year's festival. Sponsors L'Oreal and Alcatel will bestow the "L'Oreal-Best Chinese Contemporary Photographer Award" and "Alcatel Chinese Photographer's Book Prize" for the second year in a row to recognize the works of talented Chinese photographers.



Student actors from Wuhan University performed in *Norwegian Wood*, an adaptation of Haruki Murakami's novel.

Photos by Li Yan

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Red Lanterns Relight



Finding Nemo Soundtrack Released

By Dong Nan

The soundtrack to the latest Disney cartoon *Finding Nemo* was released last week. The Chinese version of the theme song, *Beyond the Sea* is performed by Chinese pop star Sun Nan, who also wrote the Chinese lyrics. The original version is sung by Robbie Williams.

"I have to admit that English lyric parallels with the music better, but still I prefer Sun's version," commented high school student Wang Feiping to *Beijing Today*.

"I love *Finding Nemo* very much," said Sun Nan at a press conference last week, "... now I even feel guilty when I eat fish."

Chinese versions of a series of Disney music albums are set to follow the release of *Finding Nemo*, including *Sing-along with Princess*, *Sing-along with Mickey and Pals*, *Toy Story Sing-along Songs* and *Disney Mania*.



By Dong Nan

Back in 1998, a new sound blending dance rhythms with a soul of warmth and humanism was heard on Beijing's airwaves. The sound was Supermarket, an underground electronic band formed in 1997, with their debut album *The Look*.

The Look is permeated with the gentle and sweet guitar melodies and Robert Smith-style voice of lead singer Yusan, breaking over the cold and solid digital rhythms like fresh and vivid colors splashed against a silver gray background. Sometimes the disparate sounds fight against each other, sometimes they compromise, eventually mixing together to create an atmosphere that verges on, but never quite falls into, sentimentality.

The Look was hailed by *Video and Audio World* and *Southern Cities* as one of the "Top 10 Chinese Albums of 1998."

The second album in 1999, *Seven Weapons* went further down the road of dance music, with a greater emphasis on percussion, bass and sampling, while retaining the counterpoint of tender guitar melodies and vocals. The ten tracks on the album were anonymously tilted *S1* to *S10*.

After *Seven Weapons*, *Supermarket* more or less disappeared for several years, however they reemerged last year, to the joy of fans, with a single titled *Rooms*. According to their record company, Modern Sky, a new album is due later this year.

Line up: Vocals, Guitar: Yusan / DJ, Vocals: Zhu Yuhang / DJ, Drums: Wang Yong

The Look (1998) **Recommendations:** Meigui Gongyuan (Rose Garden), Jiaru Mingtian Lailin (If You Come Tonight), Baozha (Explosion). *Seven Weapons* (1999) **Recommendations:** *S1*, *S3*, *S7*, *S8*.



Supermarket

New Jackie Chan Film to Premiere in Beijing

By Dong Nan

Jackie Chan's latest film, *The Medallion*, is to premiere at Beijing's Great Hall of the People Saturday night. It will be the first time for the popular Hong Kong action star to first screen one of his international productions in China rather than the US.

Originally scheduled to open simultaneously in China and the US, Sony pushed back the American release of *The Medallion* by two weeks, however at Chan's insistence, the date for the China release remains unchanged.

Originally titled *Highbinders*, the inauspicious name was reportedly changed at the suggestion of a fortune teller. Jackie Chan plays a seasoned Hong Kong cop who is killed in the line of duty, but is then reanimated with supernaturally enhanced powers.

"*The Medallion* offers more action than humanly possible from the world's favorite action star," promises Jackie Chan's official homepage, www.jackie-chan.com.

WORLDWIDE



Jason Biggs, star of the film *American Wedding*

American Wedding Is Last Slice of 'Pie'

Looks like moviegoers are getting the last slice of *American Pie* with this month's release of *American Wedding*, which completes the comedy series, according to the film's star.

Jason Biggs, whose character Jim pulls off outrageous, frat-boy antics in the trilogy, said the latest installment will be the end.

Biggs told reporters recently that he felt a bit sad working on the set, knowing *American Wedding* would be his last time working with the cast of Shannon Elizabeth, Alyson Hannigan, Chris Klein and others. (AP)



Mick Jagger performs at the Concert for SARS Relief in Toronto, July 30, 2003

Mick Takes Sick; Stones Cancel Spain Show

British rock 'n' roll band the Rolling Stones suspended a concert in the Spanish tourist resort town of Benidorm after 60-year-old lead singer Mick Jagger fell ill with laryngitis, organizers said Tuesday.

The concert set for later in the day was part of the Stones' *Forty Licks* tour and had been expected to attract some 30,000 spectators at the Foeits Sports Stadium. (AP)

British Royals Offer Rare Glimpse of Home Life

Britain's Prince Charles is throwing open his new London mansion to give the public a rare glimpse of the lavish abode he will share with his two sons and partner Camilla Parker Bowles.

The 54-year-old heir-to-the-throne took up official residence at Clarence House — a cream-colored, five-story home built in the 1820s and occupied by the

Queen Mother for half a century until her death in 2002 — earlier this week.

Courtiers showed reporters round on Tuesday. And members of the public will be allowed to take \$8 tours from Wednesday, with 46,000 visitors expected over the summer. (Reuters)

Judge Seals Cameron Diaz Modeling Photos

Photographs of Cameron Diaz taken at a private modeling session about a decade ago, before she was a star, were ordered sealed by a judge.



Cameron Diaz

Judge Alan Haber ordered the photos and a videotape sealed Monday, saying Diaz has a right to privacy of her own body. He set a September 12 hearing in Superior Court on her request for an injunction against photographer John Rutter.

Diaz, a co-star of the two *Charlie's Angels* films, wasn't present at the hearing. Afterward, lawyers for the 30-year-old actress and Rutter wouldn't discuss the contents of the videotape.

Ex-Nirvana Members Follow Different Paths

One former Nirvana band member said he will punch out of the music industry, while another is hoping for a shot at playing with Led Zeppelin if a reunion tour ever comes together.

Ex-Nirvana bassist Krist Novoselic said he "can't deal with" the music industry, and will opt instead for a possible shot at a politics.

Dave Grohl, Nirvana's former drummer, has no plans to quit the music business. In fact, Grohl said that if Led Zeppelin ever get together for a reunion tour, he'd cut off an important part of his body to fill in for the late John Bonham behind the drums. (AP)



Dave Grohl

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Taking the Plunge

By Yu Shanshan

For people drawn by the ocean's mysteries, the deep end of a swimming pool can be an unforgivable tease. Those that hear the calling of the seas' depths or want to witness the marvels of marine life up-close owe it to themselves to try scuba diving, a plunge impossible to make without the right equipment.

Fortunately, everything scubaists need with the exception of the ocean is available at relatively reasonable prices at TUSA Scuba Equipment, a new retail counter on the fourth floor of SciTech Plaza. The small store offers a good range of gear, from bodysuits to masks, snorkels and foot fins that fetch 310 to 960 yuan a pair.

TUSA products stand out from the scuba pack because of their quality and careful, catchy designs. Customers can get gear that fits their character by avoiding typical black and choosing racy green or pink-colored fins or suits. At the same time, the equipment is targeted at divers of all types, such as masks that come in a four-window model aimed at beginners or a two-window model for experienced professionals.

Wang Rong, China's first underwater photographer and the director of distribution for TUSA in China, has added to the store's appeal by setting up a television that runs tapes of beautiful underwater scenes he has filmed. He told *Beijing Today* that most of the counter's customers are either professional underwater workers or foreigners planning to dive during their vacations.

Where: Fourth Floor of SciTech Plaza, No.22, Jianguomenwai Avenue, Chaoyang **Open:** 9 am - 10 pm **Tel:** 6566 3036



Photo provided by Ocean Image UW Equipment Co.

Port for Posters

By Chen Si

The Movie Fan Poster Shop near Modern Plaza is a movie buff's delight, crammed with beautiful posters of films, as well as other posters of stars and music bands, artworks and outdoor scenes and more humorous images. Here you can find authentic posters of many beloved flicks, such as *Braveheart*, *A River Runs Through it* and *The Shawshank Redemption*, that can add a sense of character and personal taste to any room.

Most of the items on sale are not the run-of-the-mill posters that normally clutter the walls of teenagers' rooms,

but real first-run prints, evident in their quality, luster and value.

Store manager Wu Huijin told *Beijing Today*, "I opened this store because there was nowhere else selling posters in Beijing. I have some friends who help me with the importing side, since all the posters here are from overseas."

Some posters come on relatively thin paper while better prints come on thicker stock, part of the reason they fetch higher prices. In general, the store's posters range greatly in size and price, from just 12 yuan to a

staggering 1,350 yuan. Frames are also available in a variety of colors.

Where: No. 58, Haidian Road (opposite the south gate of Modern Plaza), Haidian **Open:** 10 am - 8 pm **Tel:** 6256 7832



Global Mini Market

By Zhang Huan

The banks of Houhai are becoming filled with bars and shops of decreasing distinction, with a few notable exceptions. One is Yellow House, a small store situated at the southwestern end of Yinding Bridge that sells unusual items at reasonable prices. The main reason the store's stocks stand out is because they were personally culled and brought back by the owner and his friends from their many travels.

The store's simple yellow facade makes it easy to mistake for a bar, but one step inside reveals a small space crammed with lots of goods, mostly silver jewelry and small handicraft works along with a selection of shoes and clothes.

Beautiful silver bangles with exotic carvings fetch only 30 yuan each, and even



Photos by Txtpuma

cheaper are tiny glass items shaped like snails or people at just 10 yuan a piece.

The exotic vibe is continued in ornate leather shoes with curled or pointed ends from Pakistan that cost a mere 20 to 30 yuan per pair and linen wrap-style skirts from Southeast Asia go for around 100 each.

Where: Southwestern end of Yinding Bridge, Houhai, Dongcheng

Tea Time

By Shan Jinliang

Wading one's way through the vendors of Silk Street or hitting the stores at Guiyou Plaza can be tiring, noisy affairs. To the rescue of sore soles and souls comes the Qiaoying Tea House, a tiny establishment with a white roof about 400 meters north of Guiyou's west gate.

This sanctuary for tired shoppers and tea aficionados offers outside seating with long wooden tables and benches, with the added elegance of a small goldfish pond, as well as a classy interior filled with light music and soft light. Its name translates to Bridge Shadow in English, and happens to have the same name as its owner, Qiao Ying, a 30-year-old woman from Quanzhou, Fujian Province. Qiao learned to love and appreciate tea from her father, and has much to share on the subjects of tea culture, Buddhism and traditional Chinese philosophy with her customers.

The store offers a wide range of Chinese teas, such as *wulong* (*oolong*) from Fujian,



Photo by Lou Ge

pu'er from Yunnan and *longjing* from Zhejiang Province. Qiao says she personally visits the production sites of the teas she sells to ensure they are high-quality, organic and pesticide-free.

Also for sale are delicate teapots and teacups made of pottery and porcelain crafted by Qiao and some of her friends that range in price from 30 to a few hundred yuan. In preparation for the Moon Festival, the store is also currently offering some delicious moon cakes.

Where: North of Guanghua Apartments, Dongdaqiao Road, Chaoyang **Open:** 9 am - 12 pm **Tel:** 6584 2627

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Fungal Fiesta at Xiao Beilou

By Xiao Rong

The wide range of delicious mushrooms and other fungi on offer at the Xiao Beilou Wild Fungus Food Restaurant is sure to satisfy die-hard meat lovers, healthy eaters and dedicated vegetarians.

This chain of restaurants started in 1998 in Shenyang, in northern Liaoning Province, and has expanded to 12 branches nationwide, including the one in this city. The local eatery, which opened in January in the Tuanjiehu area, offers the chain's patented "wild fungus nourishing chafing dish (hot pot)" as well as a large variety of dishes made from fungi.

The fungal theme is clear with one step in the door, as interior walls are covered in sketches of different kinds of wild fungi, from the familiar to the freakish. Manager Jing Chunmei and her waitstaff can tell diners quite a bit about China's over-5,000-year history of fungus consumption, as well as the properties and benefits of different kinds of mushrooms, backed up by the informative Chinese-English menu.

The house special fungus hotpot, which actually has received a national patent, comes with a choice of four base broths made from caterpillar fungus, turtle, black bone chicken or wild chicken. The wild chicken soup (98 yuan for a large pot enough to feed eight, or 35 yuan for a small pot that can feed three to four people) is refreshing and an excellent match to the variety of fresh mushrooms and fungi that come on the side for boiling.

The large selection of fungus-based dishes have a lot going for them, offering great tastes, interesting textures and high nutrition content for reasonable prices. Many of the mushrooms available are so surprisingly meaty that they are cooked as vegetarian versions of standard carnivore fare. The braised mixed vegetables with mutton cubes (*luohan suyangchuan*, 38 yuan) is in fact made from *houtougu* (monkey head) mushrooms and tastes so much like mutton it could fool even discerning meat eaters. Another good choice is fried eel slices with pepper (*xiangla sushansi*, 18 yuan), a mushroom-based dish that looks exactly like its namesake.

Fungus even brings new depths and flavors to basic staples like noodles. Golden melon noodles with termite mushrooms (*jizong jinguanmian*, 5 yuan) may have an off-putting name, but is really delicious, the pumpkin-based noodles and floppy mushrooms complimenting each other nicely in texture, color and flavor.

Prices are somewhat high, but reasonable considering the quality of food, service and environment, and the rare chance to chow down on some of nature's more exotic vegetable creations.

Add: Tuanjiehu Beiwutiao No.1, 600 meters east of Changhong Bridge, Chaoyang **Open:** 10:00 am - 11:00 pm **Tel:** 8597 8135 **Price:** average 98 yuan per person

Braised mixed vegetables with mutton cubes (*luohan suyangchuan*, 38 yuan)



Dining Light at Zaliang Shifu

By Dong Nan

Heavy salty staples great in winter can be too much for the stomach in the heat of summer, but finding attractive alternatives is not always simple. A good choice is Zaliang Shifu, a restaurant in the Yayuncun area that specializes in dishes based on wild greens, grains, congee and wild mushrooms.

The restaurant is located inside the courtyard of the low-key Yanhuang Art Museum north of the Fourth Ring Road. Its décor is simple, mostly made of bamboo and fake ivy, giving it a natural, rustic feel.

Floor manager Zhao Xiuqin highly recommends the dish *yezaizaban*, a crisp and tasty mixture of a variety of wild greens that goes for only 14 yuan.

Other satisfying, unusual vegetable selections include the fried cactus (*xiangqiang xianrenzhang*, 12 yuan) with a slightly bitter bite and luscious fresh aloe (*liangbanluhui*, 12 yuan).

Alternative grains, such as oat flour (*younmian*) and corn flour, are the stars of many items on the menu, appearing as noodles, dumplings, rolls and in other forms. Not only are they delicious, foods made from these grains are far more nutritious and beneficial than those made with nutrition-deficient plain white flour. Most grain dishes fetch a reasonable 8 yuan to 10 yuan each. Converts to oat noodles can purchase them in instant form, called *younmian fangbianmian*, priced at 108 yuan for 60 bags.

To many Chinese, a bowl of congee is the best way to end a meal, and with 24 kinds on the menu, Zaliang Shifu is sure to have a congee to meet any occasion. They come in sweet and savory versions, many of which highlight the restaurant's specialties, such as abalone and mushroom congee (*baoyu dongguzhou*, 10 yuan), fresh aloe congee (*xianluhuizhou*, 5 yuan) and mixed grain congee (*zaguzhou*, 6 yuan).

Add: Courtyard of Yanhuang Art Museum, No. 9 Huizhong Lu **Open:** 9:00 am - 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm-9:00 pm **Tel:** 6491 1085 **Price:** 30 yuan per person

Bingcheng xiaochao (18 yuan)

Homely Food at Zhongfahong

By Sun Ming

By skimping on pretense and focusing on simple, satisfying food, the small Zhongfahong restaurant near Guomao (the World Trade Center) has proven a popular eating spot among the employees of the many enterprises in that area.

Li Feifei, an IT engineer and regular customer, told *Beijing Today*, "Their dishes are just like the ones my mom cooks. They serve typical, satisfying home-style food that is delicious and cheap."

The menu offers a wide range of dishes representing the cuisines of Guangdong, Hunan and Shandong provinces, as well as northeastern-style food. One of the Cantonese-style specials of the house is *heye jiabao yapian* (duck meat fried with sweet catsup, 28 yuan), a plate of succulent duck served surrounded by fresh buns. The meat can be eaten directly, or packed into the buns to make delicious mini-sandwiches.

Carnivores can try the roast lamb leg (*kao yangtui*, 6 yuan each), a Shandong-style specialty that has a nice spicy kick well complemented by a frosty beer.

A good choice after such oily fare is *bingcheng xiaochao* (18 yuan), made from a delicious and nutritious mixture of black fungus, cloud ear fungus, dates, mushrooms and cucumber.

Restaurant manager Hong Li said, "In all our dishes, we stick by one philosophy — nothing too fancy. We specialize in home-style food, but we cook it even better than at home because we have made improvements to many of the recipes." Exactly what kind of improvements, however, remains a closely-guarded secret.

Add: 50 meters southeast of Guomaoqiao **Open:** 10:00 am-12:00 pm **Tel:** 6568 0632 **Price:** 30 yuan per person



Riding the Mexican Wave

By Jim Rogers

One of the few purveyors of Mexican food ever to hit this city, the Mexican Wave restaurant has been a Beijing institution since it opened in 1989. Yet it can be tough to spot when passing by because its door is hidden behind a small forest of palms and other plants.

The interior keeps up the Mexican theme with murals on the walls and tiled floors, complemented by cold Coronas and the best margaritas in town. Aside from tepid interpretations of standard Mexican dishes like burritos, the menu also offers a range of other international options. One stand-out is the Alaskan king crab legs dinner, 500 grams of delicious, succulent crab.

The Wave was also the first joint in the capital to offer pizza and continues to bake some of the best pies in town, available in 21 different versions. A favorite is the Diavalo, which comes stacked with cheese, ham, salami, mushrooms and onion.

Undaunted by rumors earlier this year that Dongdaqiao Road was slated for destructive widening, owner Greg Elliot decided to renovate and expand his restaurant. The best of the new additions is the rooftop terrace, generally a well-kept secret. This open-air space has a great atmosphere and is large enough for parties but also intimate enough for romantic diners for two.

The Wave has a dedicated following, in part because it is the home base for a local darts team and the Hash House Harriers, a running and drinking club that meets at the restaurant every Sunday.

Add: Dongdaqiao Lu, north of Guiyou Shopping Center **Open:** 11:30 am - 2 pm **Tel:** 6506 3961 **Price:** 100 yuan per person

Tsingtao to Host Bash for Hundredth Birthday

By Shan Jinliang

The city of Qingdao in Shandong Province is set to hold a massive party for the centenary birthday of arguably its most famous product, Tsingtao Beer, on August 15 and 16.

Tsingtao, China's largest and one of its oldest beer makers, will host a whole slew of celebrations and activities, starting on the morning of August 15 with a grand ceremony at the Shangri-la Hotel Qingdao, followed by a parade with ten floats depicting the brewery's colorful history. That afternoon, the new Qingdao Beer Museum will open its doors to the public and all visitors will get in free during its first three days of operation. The exciting, beery day will close with a bang with a fireworks show at 8 pm.

Throughout the festive weekend, special promotions for Tsingtao beers will be offered around the city and around the world. Moreover, the label's "Hundredth Celebration Beer" will be released on markets in China and abroad. Real beer hounds will be able to test their guzzling abilities during competitions held around the brew-loving city both days.

Cooking Chinese at Home

Pickled Vegetables

By Dong Nan

Pickled vegetables are popular throughout China and turn up in many forms. Some are simple and sealed into vacuum packed foil containers, an easy way to jazz up rice often seen on trains, or more complicated with a mixture of ingredients and flavors. Sichuan in particular is known for its pickles, normally a mix of cabbage, radish, carrots and peppers. Sichuan pickled vegetables have a nice crunch with a sour pungency mixed with a sweet edge that make them refreshing and a god way to counter heavier dishes in the summer.

The traditional method of pickling vegetables requires special tools, strict sanitation standards and patience, as the vegetables are canned for at least 10 days. Below is a recipe for a simplified, satisfying version that can be enjoyed must faster.

Ingredients:

250 grams cabbage; 250 grams cucumber; 50 grams carrot; 50 grams white vinegar; 50 grams white sugar; 25 grams fresh ginger; 25 grams dried chili peppers; 25 grams Sichuan peppercorns (*huajiao*); 5 grams salt.

Procedure:

Chop cabbage roughly into two-centimeter-square pieces, and cut cucumber and carrots into thin strips.

Fill a medium sized pot halfway with water and bring it to a boil. Add the cabbage, cucumber and carrot and cook until water boils again. Remove vegetables with a strainer, then run under cold water to cool and put them in a bowl.

Fill the same pot with around 250 milliliters of water, then add the sugar, vinegar, ginger, chilies, Sichuan peppercorns and salt and bring to a boil, then turn off heat. Put the liquid into a sealable container and set aside until cool.

Once pickling liquid is room temperate, add the vegetables and refrigerate the container for at least 12 hours. Serve cold, draining liquid from vegetables before plating.

Recipe

Gazpacho at Home

By Joel Kirkhart

The classic Spanish cold tomato soup gazpacho is a great way to cool off and enjoy the vine-ripe tomatoes that are starting to hit local markets. There are countless varieties of the dish and just as many opinions on exactly what kind of gazpacho is truly authentic. The recipe below, which calls for V8 juice, will never win praise for authenticity, but is nevertheless delicious and quicker and easier to make than many other versions.

Ingredients

1 large cucumber
1 small red bell pepper
1 celery rib
1 small garlic clove
2 cups V8 or tomato juice
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, or to taste
1 1/2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce, or to taste

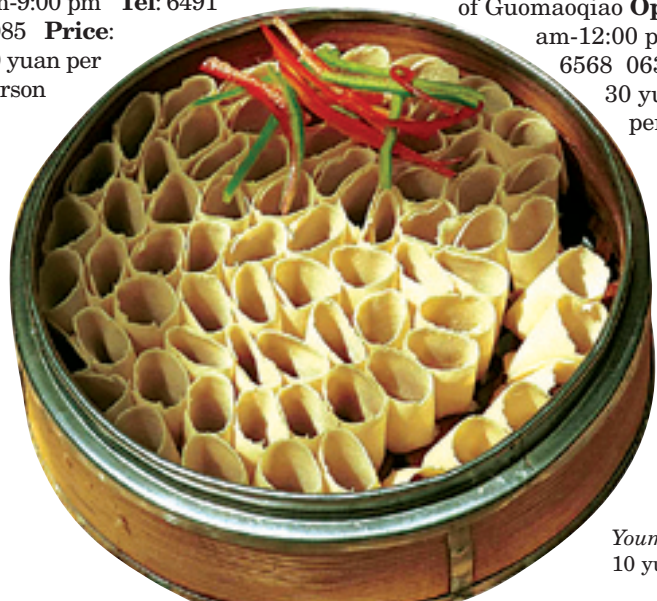
Garnish: chopped fresh chives

Procedure:

Cut cucumber in half lengthwise and then cut each half lengthwise into three spears. Cut spears crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick pieces and transfer to a large bowl. Cut bell pepper and celery into 1/4-inch dice and add to cucumber. Mince garlic and toss with cucumber mixture. Stir in remaining ingredients and season soup with salt and pepper.

In a blender or food processor, puree half of soup until smooth and return to bowl, stirring to combine. Chill soup, covered, until cold, at least one hour, and up to two days, to allows flavors to intensify and meld. Season soup and serve garnished with chives.

Photos by Ren Guangping / Chen Jialiang / Qu Liyan / Shen Huang / Dong Nan



Youmian rolls, 10 yuan

Stage

Zhanzheng, Gege (War, Brother)

Director Zhou Wenhong devises a dialogue-light script that relies on gestures to communicate a story about a liberation army man after a fictitious war. Performed by a group of graduates from the Central Academy of Drama.

Where: People's Art Theatre 22, Wangfujing Dajie (behind Capital Theatre) **When:** till August 17, 7:15 pm **Admission:** 80 yuan **Tel:** 6525 0123



Zhanzheng, Gege Photo by Li Yan

Raise the Red Lantern

Adapted from Zhang Yimou's award-winning film, about the travails of growing up female in a traditional Chinese feudal household. The score by Chen Qigang, a former student of French composer Olivier Messiaen, mixes Chinese folk music with traditional opera melodies.

Where: Tianqiao Theater, 30 Beiwei Lu **When:** August 8-10, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 100-680 yuan **Tel:** 8315 6300

**Wo Zai Tiantang Deng Ni (I Am Waiting For You In Heaven)**

Recently-widowed Bai Xuemei must decide whether to tell her children that, 50 years ago, as part of the Liberation Army, she and her husband marched to Tibet and later adopted the offspring of several sacrificed comrades. Performed by Liberation Army's Art Institute.

Where: Ethnic Cultural Palace Theatre **When:** August 8-9, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-180 yuan **Tel:** 6605 2404

**Beijie Nanyuan'r (The Courtyard South of North Street)**

Directed by Ren Ming, the five-act drama focuses on a courtyard that is quarantined after a resident (played by popular TV and film star Pu Cunxin) is suspected of being infected by SARS. Based on interviews with inhabitants of a courtyard that was quarantined during the crisis. Also starring Zhu Xu, Yang Lixin.

Where: Capital Theatre, 22 Wangfujing Dajie **When:** till August 31, 7:15 pm **Admission:** 40-280 yuan **Tel:** 6525 0996

**Yueguang Yaolan qu (Moonlight Lullaby)**

A Chinese musical set in ancient China tells a beautiful fairy tale for children during the summer holiday.

Where: 64 Donganmen Dajie, west of Wangfujing **When:** August 8-10, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 40-100 yuan **Tel:** 6406 8888, 6406 9999

**Changzheng Zuge (Odes to Long March)**

Classic songs and dances to commemorate the historical Long March in 1931.

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theater, 135 Xizhimenwai Dajie **When:** August 8-9, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 100-500 yuan **Tel:** 13911131344, 84085525/26/27 ext.226

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Auction

Guardian Auction

The 76th weekly Guardian auction will be held August 8-10, featuring over 2,000 pieces of painting (both modern and ancient), porcelain, and jewelry.

Where: Jianguo Garden Hotel **When:** August 8-10, 9:00 am - 6 pm **Tel:** 6518 2315

Language Exchange

A Chinese Junior Student (male) majoring in English Broadcasting and Hosting seeks a native English speaker for language exchange. **Email:** icyball254@yahoo.com.cn

Party

Space Party

Kick it with DJ Han and guests for a night of house, hip hop, techno and funk.

Where: The Den, north of City Hotel, Sanlitun **When:** August 8, 9 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan (includes one drink) **Tel:** 6592 6290

Music

Chinese Folk

Beijing Song and Dance Troupe performs Jiujiu Yanyangtian (A Bright Autumn Day), Huaer Weishenme Zheyang Hong (Why Are the Flowers So Red), Chunjiang Hua Yue Ye (A Spring Moonlit Night Along the River) - which was inspired the Yangtze River, and more. Conducted by Liu Fuquan.

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall, Inside Zhongshan Park, Xi Changan Jie **When:** August 8, 7:30 **Admission:** 10-60 yuan **Tel:** 6559 8285

Exhibitions

Beads and Brush Stroke

Prayer brings together 18 artists whose works convey a repetitive process akin to Buddhist meditation practices. Featuring Ding Yi, Lu Qing, Zhou Yangming and Shih Chin-hua. Additional works on display at a nearby space.

Where: Beijing Tokyo Art Projects, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Dashanzi Art District **When:** Tue-Sun 10.30am-6.30pm, till October 10 (Closed August 16-26) **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8457 3245

Home, Sweet Home

16 artists including Sun Chengxin, Wu Chunqiang and Cao Xue'an display loving portraits of their hometowns, over 60 works in all.

Where: New Art Center, No.136 Nanchizi Dajie **When:** Daily 9am-5pm till August 25 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6528 9103



Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle

They're the angels who look good at all angles. In the second installment of this popular movie franchise based on the 70s American TV hit show, with the lovely Demi Moore, who has stolen information that could put every US federal witness in danger. Directed by McG; starring Drew

Barrymore, Cameron Diaz, Lucy Liu. In English (Call for program times).

Where: Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng (UME International Cineplex), 44 Shuangyushu Kexueyuan, Haidian **When:** till August 15 **Admission:** 70,80 yuan **Tel:** 6261 2851

Jams

Tang Dynasty

Renowned metal band Tang Dynasty returns this Friday with their old hits. Tomorrow, six bands including Scarecrow (Maitian Shouwangzhe), Reflector (Fanguangjing), Flying Fish (Feiyu), Gongfu, and No Colour will perform.

Where: Get Lucky, 500 meters east of the south gate of the University of International Business and Economics, Chaoyang



Tang Dynasty

When: August 8-9, 9:30 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan (40 yuan for students) **Tel:** 6429 9109

"The Harder they Come"

The Deptford Crew and the Treelounge Massive team up for another night of Afro-Caribbean groove. DJs Albert, C and Tree keep you moving all night.

Where: Treelounge East Third Ring Road, 100m south of Agricultural Exhibition Center **When:** August 9, 6pm-3am **Admission:** free, fruit punch 20 yuan

Movies

**Temptress Moon (Feng Yue)**

A sexy tale of tangled desires and hedonism set in 1920s Shanghai. Leslie Cheung plays Zhongliang, the young hero, who runs away from his wealthy family and is later sent back by his gangster boss to kidnap his sister-in-law (Gong Li), whom he adores. Directed by Chen Kaige. In Mandarin with English subtitles.

Where: Cherry Lane, Fountain Terrace, Hilton Hotel, 1 Dongfang Lu Dongsanhuan Beilu **When:** August 8-9, 8:30 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan (includes one drink) **Tel:** 6466 2288 ext 7370, 13901134745

Now: Praising Mao

On the Way (Zai Lu Shang) (45min, 2002), directed by Wang Ni. Songs in Praise of Mao Zedong (Mao Zedong He Tade Songge) (60min, 1999-2003).

Where: NOW Design Club 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, 798 Art District **When:** August 8, 7pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6438 5938, 6438 5719

24 Eyes

This film depicts the story of the relationship between an elementary school teacher and her 12 students on a remote island. With pre-war Japan as the setting, the inevitable tragedies and the pupils' destinies slowly unfold as their country undergoes political and economic changes from the 1920s until the end of the war.

This heartwarming film moved millions of Japanese people, and garnered most of the film awards in Japan in the year it was produced. In Japanese with Chinese subtitles.

Where: Space for Imagination, 5 Xiwangzhuang, Haidian **When:** August 9, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6279 1280

Sports

**Xcellent National Final**

The final competition includes skateboarding, in-line skating (street course & flatland freestyle) and bike trials.

Where: Workers' Stadium, Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang **When:** August 8-10, 9am-6pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8355 7627/28 ext. 0

Spring Valley Loop

This loop hike passes through three counties, with beautiful views of valleys and ridges, and visits unusual parts of the Great Wall.

Where: outside Lido Starbucks **When:** August 10, 8am, return by 5.30pm **Admission:** 150 yuan (adults), 100 yuan (children under 12) **Tel:** 137 0100 3694 **Email:** huilin@bjhikers.com Reservation is required.

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By Dong Nan



Houhai Hutong

Yandai Xiejie, or 'Pipe Street,' used to be a market selling smoking pipes. Surrounded by Houhai bars, it still retains a distinct flavour of ancient Beijing.

By Alan saint-John

A friend suggested to me recently that spending an evening at Houhai was as an essential part of the Beijing experience as a visit to the Forbidden City. "Lots of bars, nice little restaurants, tea houses, in a charming, picturesque area of the city," she said.

That was good enough for me, so together with a Chinese colleague, I set out last Friday night on a mission of exploration.

Starting from Yinding Qiao, the arched stone bridge that separates the two lakes, Houhai and Qianhai, we headed east into Yandai Xiejie, or Pipe Street.

ranging from 600 to 800 yuan. Despite our best efforts, the owner showed not the slightest inclination to bargain.

Apparently, many years ago, virtually all the shops in this hutong sold smoking pipes of various types, hence its name, Yandai Xiejie, which literally means "Pipe Street."

Saying farewell to the owners of the tea shop, we continued along Yandai Xiejie, passing a small grocery selling many kinds of vegetable and various hot foods, including some delicious smelling roast chicken pieces. This reminded me that I had not eaten since lunchtime and it was now 8 pm!

Our next stop was a shop for fishing enthusiasts. It is difficult to believe that any fish caught in Houhai might actually be edible, but this does not seem to deter the scores of amateur anglers who can be seen whiling away the hours around the banks of the lakes, with the tips of their fishing poles just touching the water's surface.

The shop is owned by a Mr. Wang and run by his son Yue Ting. Although very small, it is packed on one side with fishing equipment of all sorts, while on the other side are antiques, porcelain vases, souvenirs and mementos, including the ubiquitous collection of Chairman Mao badges, large and small. I offered 5 yuan for a tiny one, and Wang laughed, saying it was worth at least 10!

place so far on Yandai Xiejie, and we spent about half an hour here, looking out over the terrace onto the bustling hutong. My friend chatted away with our waitress, asking if she could recommend a good place to eat, while I made some notes and enjoyed the beer, the scenery and the cool breeze!

On the way to our next stop, a Tibetan handicraft shop, we passed two rather interesting little shops. The first of these was a coolly decorated boutique, with no name, selling smart and elegant clothes for young woman. The owner was a pleasant young woman called Li Min.

The second shop, owned by a Mr. Zhou, was an interesting little place selling hand made items such as large sea shell carvings mounted on wooden bases and cotton designs with calligraphy motifs, as well as calligraphy to hang on the wall painted in various colors. I especially like the striking black ones, as I cannot read Chinese, what they were about remains a mystery. My friend agreed that they looked pretty good and said he would like to have one in his own house. The shop also sold various little items like fashion accessories for women, such as large hand made hair clips.

The Tibetan handicraft shop is aptly named, "An Appointment with Heaven." Tibet has always held an aura of fascination to me, and I found many of the beautifully hand made items in this shop quite irresistible. The shop sells a variety of mysterious looking and beautifully painted ceremonial face masks, used, so the owner told me, to drive away evil spirits. There are also some beautifully carved bronze figures of Buddha, Guanyin – the Goddess of Mercy, and other deities.

The shop also has a wonderful assortment of beautifully colored saris from India and many types of beauty accessories like bead necklaces and all kinds of rings, for men and women, with interesting and beautiful designs.

On one of the walls are a collection of *thangkas*, religious motifs and depictions of Buddhist deities painted on silk. On another wall are various large scenic photos of Tibet itself. If Vanilla was my favorite place on Yandai Xiejie, this place was definitely my second favorite, not just because of my fascination with Tibetan culture, but also because of the many original and beautiful items on sale here. Definitely worth a visit, especially if you are searching for a special present or souvenir.

I enjoyed myself so much in An Appointment with Heaven, I almost forgot that I had skipped supper! Almost!

Before we came to the eastern end of Yandai Xiejie, we passed a smart looking Thai restaurant that I noted for a subsequent visit, and a foot massage shop, which, had we not been so famished, would have been just the way to finish and evening stroll along this Houhai Hutong. There was also a barber shop, the smallest I have ever seen, offering a wash and cut for just 10 yuan. Now that's what I call a bargain!



Lotus Bar



Silver decorations fill the Tibetan style shop.



Vanilla's second floor



Appointment with Heaven sells hand made artefacts.



Small shops sell a variety of locally made clothing.

Our first stop, after passing a couple of fruit sellers, was a typical hutong tea house. The simple tearoom on the second floor is not unlike one you would find in a little village in England, except perhaps that they serve Long Jing, rather than Earl Grey, and there are no scones.

What I liked about this place was its simple, unpretentious style. Also the tea is very reasonably priced and from the window on the second floor there is a nice view of the stone bridge.

Of particular interest is a glass showcase in the little room on the ground floor containing a fascinating display of smoking pipes. The pipes are beautifully hand carved from the roots of mountain trees, and of the highest quality, the proprietor assured us.

The prices certainly reflected this claim,

On the wall of the shop is an article from the *New York Times* about this "quaint little old fishing shop" which Wang proudly pointed out to us. He told us that his father opened the shop 20 years ago and that foreigners rarely came inside.

By this time I was getting a little thirsty, so the two of us went into a nice looking and what looked to be a new bar, called "Vanilla."

I liked this place very much, it had a nice atmosphere, with old wooden floors, small wooden tables, the sort of place I thought you might find on a remote beach somewhere, I could almost hear the sound of the waves breaking ...

Climbing a few flights of wooden steps, we emerged on a nice terrace at the top of the building, where we sat and chatted and sipped a Yanjing beer (just one!). This was my favorite

Photos by Wang Wei

Alan saint-John is an English teacher. He has lived in Beijing for four months.